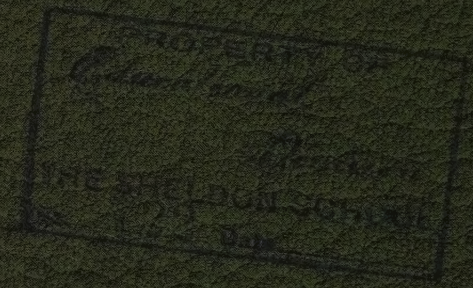
THE SUCCESSFUL SALESMAN

By FRANK FARRINGTON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BY

FRANK FARRINGTON

AUTHOR OF "SELLING SUGGESTIONS," "STORE MANAGEMENT—COMPLETE," "RETAIL ADVERTISING—COMPLETE," ETC.

CHICAGO

LAIRD & LEE, Inc.

PUBLISHERS

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The Successful Salesman

CHAPTER I

WHAT MAKES A SALESMAN

MEN are likely to become lawyers, doctors, or carpenters because that line of work in particular appeals to them. They have a natural tendency that way. But as to salesmen, well, how many traveling men do you know who chose that line of work deliberately because they liked to sell goods and because they thought themselves naturally fitted for the occupation?

When we consider how few traveling men, comparatively, possess natural, inborn talent for selling goods, it is remarkable that so large a proportion are successful. It requires hard work to achieve success in any line of work for which one has no natural liking or adaptability.

Of course it is quite impossible that all men should know at the beginning of their business careers just what kind of work they are going to be able to do best. Many youngsters do not seem to have any noticeable talent for any one kind of work. They might take up engineering, or medicine, or portrait painting, and make a good living at any of them, not because of natural ability in that line but because of a natural determination to succeed in whatever they undertake.

A man cannot succeed in salesmanship or in any other work merely because he is fitted for it by nature. He must have persistence, energy, determination. Then he will succeed whether he is naturally fitted for the work or not.

Probably nine men in ten who set out to be salesmen can become good salesmen, successful at least to the extent of making a living, if they will start in to learn salesmanship as they would learn any other profession. It is a mistake to assume that anyone who will, can go right out on the road and sell goods, that it requires no special experience or knowledge. It requires not only specialized knowledge of the goods to be sold, but also a thorough knowledge of selling, which is itself a profession.

The beginner in salesmanship, the young man just starting out to gain his initial experience in selling, can learn much about the work and about proper methods without waiting to pick it up as he goes along. The old salesman, too, can learn a great deal other than by experience. No man ever gets to where he knows all about his line of work, least of all when it is salesmanship. And no man gets to where he can assume that it is not worth while for him to study his kind of work in the available text books and literature on the subject.

Not only is there a great deal of very useful printed information obtainable regarding salesmanship, but the last few years have seen a great increase in the amount of work done by manufacturers in instructing their salesmen as to how they should go about making sales. There is still room for a further development of this kind of service and assistance. The house that stands right with its salesmen and

coöperates with them at every turn will find it much easier to get and to hold the right kind of traveling representatives.

It is always a great satisfaction to a sales manager to find a man who bears evidence of being a born salesman, but as a rule such men, when found, are already pretty closely attached to good positions. Men who can step right out and sell the top quantity of any line of goods in the very beginning are scarce indeed.

A good force will be built up much more quickly, and it will possess greater cohesion, if it is built up of men who have the ability to learn to sell and who have been taken on and taught properly. A man who has developed with and has been helped to develop by a good house, will stick by that house as long as he is properly treated, and the house can afford to pay him according to his developing ability. A good salesman does not change employers every time he is offered another position at a little increase in salary.

The first qualification that operates to make a man a good salesman is the desire to become one, the wish to get on to the high ground. A simple feeling that making a living on the road is a good way of getting a nice salary, with all expenses paid, while seeing some of the country, is not at all the spirit that will make a good salesman. It will merely make a hired man. But if a man goes into the business of selling on the road because he feels there is an opportunity in that work to get ahead and to develop into a high-class business man, his chance of getting somewhere near to the top will be good, provided he is a worker.

Whether a man has a natural aptitude for selling

or not is less important than whether he is a worker. Time and again the worker makes good where the mere genius, the man who has only great natural talent, fails. No matter what a man's native ability may be, he will go no higher than he aims. The mere hanger-on in the army of traveling salesmen will soon reach the point where even hanging-on will be too hard work for him.

The man who has the determination to make good, along with a willingness or a desire to learn how, can go as far as he likes. The man who has no inclination to learn, or who thinks he already knows enough to get along, will never get his foot off the bottom rung of the ladder. In salesmanship, as in exploration or in laboratory investigation, the man who gets somewhere worth while is the man who is always trying to go a little farther than somebody else went, always trying to find out something the last man ahead of him did not discover.

Efficiency goes far to make a man a good salesman, and efficiency never stands still. To be really efficient a man must be able to do his work as well as anybody could do it. He must be able to do it better this year than he could do it last year, and better a year from today than he can do it today. The really efficient or proficient man never entertains the idea that he has learned all he really needs to know about his work.

The man who wants to be a better salesman very naturally turns to the house that hires him for advice and information, and it is the business of every sales manager to be in a position to give his salesmen the best of help in developing salesmanship. The salesman with experience may have his own successful

methods of approach, his own agreeable mannerisms and individual characteristics, but he feels that the house knows the goods perfectly and should know more about how they ought to be sold than any employee. The salesman ought to be able to look up to the house, to the sales manager, and that power above him ought to be able to supply him with the assistance and information needed.

If the house is to know more about how its goods should be sold than the man it sends out to sell them, there should be someone at the head of the selling department who is a past master in salesmanship. The sales manager ought to know as much about the actual selling of goods as he does about managing salesmen.

Of course sales managers of the desired qualifications do not grow on every bush, and there is abundant opportunity for good salesmen, by studying management as well as actual salesmanship, to qualify for the higher position of sales manager.

The sales manager—the house behind the salesman—can do a great deal to create interest and enthusiasm in representatives and to keep it up. Some houses have well-developed systems of competition among their men in different territories, and these are developed for the purpose of creating enthusiasm. Others depend upon the personal element, and inspire their sales force by letters and by personal talks.

It is less important how the enthusiasm is created than that it exists. An enthusiastic selling force may sell the goods the trade actually demands, but it will not develop any new business.

Some men are naturally enthusiastic. They bubble

over with enthusiasm. Others are quite lacking in that quality, and they have to get along on the enthusiasm of others, which does not keep them properly keyed up. For a salesman to try to raise himself without enthusiasm is a good deal like trying to lift yourself by your own boot-straps.

In order to be a success as a salesman, you must first be a success as a man. Begin at the beginning. If it is too late to begin at the beginning, then begin right where you are. It will never be any earlier.

We are fond of calling the commercial successes of today "live wires." That is what they are every minute they are on duty. They may let down and shut off the current while they are away from business. It is wise that they do. But did you ever see one of these "live wires" loafing on his job?

You who have already achieved success in your business, or established a trade you think will last you out, may be able to afford the luxury of taking it easy occasionally during working hours, but you will not do it.

Every salesman should assume that he is competent to handle any class of trade. He should acquire a self-confidence that will enable him to hold up his head in any company. He should have faith in his ability to make people think about his goods as he himself thinks.

If you limit yourself in your selling ambitions, you will never be a salesman. You will stop with being an order taker, a mere puppet. The man who does not aim high will never shoot high, and the man who shoots at cheap trade will get only that at which he aims.

The trouble with too many men is that they set

out with the idea that they can accomplish only so much. They place a limit on their ability, and naturally they cannot rise above that limit.

You who have not yet reached the height of your ambition—and that means about nine hundred and ninety-nine men in every thousand—cannot spare time to loaf. You need to put in all the time not required for rest or recreation in doing or in learning how to do.

Now, I know some salesmen are going to read this who will say: "That's all right, but you needn't think I'm going to work myself to death and lose all the fun in life for the salary I'm getting."

The man who takes that attitude makes a mistake. He probably does his employer some injustice, but he does himself infinitely more.

The employer is entitled to get more work from his employees than he pays for, or he will not make any profit on them. But if he has a salesman who is not making good, he can let him go. You, as an employee, cannot do your employer any more injustice than he is willing to permit. But you cannot get away from yourself. By shirking, you are robbing yourself of the advantages of experience, and you are saddling yourself with the qualities of a quitter.

If you expect to be successful some day, you must begin right now to develop the qualities required for success. Success comes because one has developed the qualities that make it. The rule never works backward. No man ever became a success and then developed the necessary qualities afterward.

The good salesman is not the result of a day's study. Salesmanship is not to be picked up at odd times. It is not a smattering of this and that. It is

a well-developed mental condition, and it comes only with a course of hard training in the school of experience.

The man who would be a good salesman must have the courage to stick to the learning. Sticktoitiveness counts for almost more in salesmanship than in any other line of work. The man who cannot stick cannot sell any line of merchandise. He may be able to hand out the goods that are asked for, but his usefulness ends with the absolute demand of the customer.

You must stick in order to learn salesmanship, and you must stick after you have learned it. If you are easily discouraged and cannot get over that unfortunate quality, I would be inclined to advise you to get out of the business of selling.

CHAPTER II

IT PAYS TO STUDY SALESMANSHIP

THERE are a good many men in the selling business who are not, strictly speaking, anxious to become better salesmen. They want to sell more goods. Oh, yes, of course, but it is only because they want to make more money. They care nothing about the profession of salesmanship.

These men get the impression that experience is all that is necessary in learning to be a high-priced salesman. The man who counts on picking up a complete knowledge of salesmanship as he goes along will fall far short of learning all he ought to learn. He will not pick up very much and he will not get very far along. No one man's experience will cover the whole range of business-getting knowledge.

If we depend upon learning selling methods from our own individual experience, we will never get beyond the kindergarten stage. We will remain rudimentary salesmen to the last. If we are going to acquire the best methods, we must study them. When we try to practice them before studying them, we get the cart before the horse.

Every house is doing all it can, within its knowledge, to increase its business. The management is advertising and planning developing the quality of its output with a view to getting more sales. But after all it is the work done by the salesmen that counts in the long run. The getting of business is up to you, and you need to know how to do your part correctly. What the house does for the trade

helps and makes it easier for you to sell goods, but if you are satisfied to solicit orders with exclusively home-grown salesmanship methods you will not get enough business to pay your salary.

The salesman has in his hands the making or the breaking of the business. You are not a mere supernumerary; you are playing a leading part. Can you hope to be successful at this if you will not study your lines?

Every day you spend more or less time in learning something. Perhaps you are learning the views of an acquaintance about political matters of practically no importance. Perhaps you are learning the latest social gossip in your circle of friends. Perhaps you are learning all about what is happening in the sporting world. All these things you are learning may be absolute facts, but that does not make them of any value. A vast conglomeration of miscellaneous information which has no other merit than that it is composed of facts will not develop you as a business man. Don't waste time learning much that is not worth learning.

Herbert Spencer said of the study and learning of useless or even of ornamental knowledge, "As such studies occupy the leisure part of life, so they should occupy the leisure part of education." Don't give up to them time that is valuable for anything else.

The main study of your business day should be the improvement of your methods of working. I believe it is desirable that a large portion of the time you are not on duty be utilized for the increasing of your working knowledge.

Of course one must have physical recreation and some amusements, but those forms of so-called rec-

reation which result in lowering one's vitality and reducing strength, and which consist partly in stuffing one's body or mind with useless food or information, ought to give place to the study of one's profession, whether it be salesmanship or surgery.

Two things every salesman ought to learn before he learns them by unfortunate mistakes. They are what to say and how to say it. If you are to know what to say about the goods, you must make it your business to study them, reading all the available literature about them, advertising matter and all. If you want to know how to say it, you must study the principles of the English language and of salesmanship. Intelligent reading is the royal road to knowledge and success in selling.

The salesman who insists upon not reading will succeed—in remaining ignorant. Of course one may learn a great deal from observation and experience without reading a line, but nevertheless the unread man must always be the comparatively unlearned man. There never was a man with a reputation for being even moderately well informed who did not help develop that reputation by much reading.

If you, Mr. Salesman, will not read, I cannot make you read. Your employer cannot make you read. The loss, however, will be your own, and you will deserve the failure that will probably be yours. But, if you are willing to read, you have the world at your feet, and the helps available in printed form take off all the limits to your progress. You can go to the top.

Wherever or whenever you read, avoid reading trash. Just because you are reading on the train is not in the least a reason for reading something of

no value. A good many of us seem to think that when there are but a few odd minutes in which to turn to a book or magazine we must read something of no educational help. We read too often with nothing in view save to pass away the time.

The endless stream of so-called evening papers pouring from the city presses all day long keeps thousands of people making literary sewers of their minds. In the smaller towns there is less of this printed trash, and this ought to give more time for good reading, though often it merely gives more time for reading sensational fiction.

The salesman is apt to think that, because he is a salesman, literature as such is an unnecessary element in his business life. He does not realize that the better all-around mental development he acquires, the better salesman he will be. The well-read man, the man with a well-balanced mental equipment, possesses inestimable advantages over him who never reads anything worth while. Reading increases the vocabulary, develops conversational powers, helps create personal magnetism.

The great men of all times, in all lines of work, have been or are students. You hear about a salesman who is remarkably successful and you think he must have been born with salesmanship plus. You hear of a wonderful statesman and you realize that he probably developed his statesmanship by hard study. It does not occur to you that the salesman also may have succeeded through being a student.

High-class business men of the sort you envy and ought to emulate are students. They read much and they read carefully, and their reading is not at all confined to business literature.

Read books that make you think. Read Emerson's Essays and his "Representative Men," Shakespeare's dramas, Balzac's novels and short stories, "Père Goriot" and others. See in Plutarch's "Lives" what made a success of Alexander or Caesar. Look behind the mere printed words in what you read. Boswell's "Life of Johnson" will open to you avenues of thought in all directions. Dr. Johnson was a man who was able and willing to discuss every subject under the sun, from business to religion. Read poetry and develop your imagination. Imagination is a valuable quality in a business man, particularly in a salesman. It is this quality that enables you to put yourself in the other fellow's place.

Don't think it a waste of time to read such literature just because there is nothing in it about selling. You can learn human nature from this reading, and human nature is the one thing you ought to study if you want to do business with humanity.

There is more human nature and more help to the imagination in a few verses by James Whitcomb Riley than in a whole edition of evening papers. Reading merely for transitory enjoyment is mighty poor employment for a man who is anxious to make a place for himself in the world.

As to reading matter with a direct application to selling, books about salesmanship are numerous, and they are full of ideas of other men about what makes good salesmanship, and how one may develop the ability to sell goods. Whether they treat directly of the selling of your kind of goods or not is not important. Salesmanship is a matter of principles and of a knowledge of how to apply them, rather than a matter of specific words to use and motions

to make in inducing a customer to purchase a certain thing.

The best way to make a book on salesmanship work for you is to keep it within reach and to read a page or paragraph whenever opportunity offers, and then to digest what you have read. Undigested mental food will no more give you ability than undigested physical food will give you strength. Mental indigestion will result from overfeeding on printed trash. You may develop useless physical tissue from eating too much food of the wrong kind. Likewise, if you read predigested literature which calls for no mental effort to absorb it, you will grow mentally inert and inefficient.

Some salesmanship literature is highly scientific. It may seem too much so. This is simply because you have not come to recognize selling as a science, regarding it instead as an elementary form of labor. If you take this position, you practically admit that you are engaged in an occupation which does not call for a high degree of intelligence, and in that case you do your calling an injustice. There is a scientific side to salesmanship just as there is to banking or to pharmacy. It is easy enough to write down an order and to be perfectly polite about it, but that is not salesmanship any more than selling soda water is pharmacy or changing a "five" is banking.

Scientific salesmanship means getting at the reasons for things customers do and say in the course of their buying, and it is learning how to counteract and to offset objections, how to meet opposing arguments and how to reduce everything to reasons for buying.

Scientific salesmanship is not something beyond you. It is something that should have place in your

daily work. You should find out what things all sorts of salesmanship have in common to such an extent that they become general principles or rules. Science is a matter of rules and their application. You will not find out anything about what those rules might do to help you unless you find out what they are and how they operate. The way to find out is by reading everything you can find that details the features of salesmanship.

There is one class of reading about which I particularly wish to speak because I believe it is most important. I could write a whole chapter on the subject, but you might think it not worth reading, and so I will not do that. As a matter of fact, however, it is very much worth while for you to read what is said on the subject, not because it is so well said, but because you need to have your thoughts directed that way.

This class of reading to which I refer is trade-paper reading. If a law were passed making it compulsory for every salesman to read the trade papers in his line of business, it would go a long way toward making good salesmen out of the poor ones.

The trade journal covering a line ought to be the daily mental food of the men selling that line. The trade paper printed for men dealing in certain kinds of goods ought to be in the hands of every salesman calling on those men. No man can keep well informed regarding the needs of his prospective customers unless he reads the trade papers in their line. Any salesman can with advantage spend ten dollars a year for business papers.

Do you want to amount to something? Do you want to be a real salesman? Then you must read

the journals fitted to your line. You need to know all about the goods you are selling. How can you sell goods intelligently unless you know how they are made, how the parts are fitted together, why they are made so and so, who makes the best, what grades of raw material are the best, and so on? How can you give the advantages of the technical principles of construction unless you are familiar with those principles? The trade papers always contain information you need right along these lines. They are all the time telling you more and more about your kind of goods and about allied kinds. They tell you what is new, what is coming and what is going.

It is not even a beginning of salesmanship simply to know the names of the items on your price list, with their chief uses. It is not all of salesmanship to be able to sell the goods. Successful salesmanship must include the development of satisfied customers. A thorough knowledge of your goods from the raw material to the finished product is essential if you are to satisfy the people who buy them.

It is not feasible for every salesman to take a course in the manufacture of his lines of goods. Not every salesman can have factory experience, but every salesman can take and read the trade publications devoted to his field.

If you cannot get these periodicals from the house, subscribe for them yourself. It will be money well invested. By reading these you increase your equipment. You develop ability to do more than you are doing, to do it better.

If you do not develop, you will not progress in value to the house or to yourself; you will not receive

larger salary. It is the student of his work who keeps doing the work better and better. It is the salesman who digs into the theory of selling as he finds it in books and papers who becomes an expert.

We all want to be high-class workmen. There is in each of us a tendency toward the top of the profession. This is ambition, and some of us have more of it than others, but it is very rare to find a man who in his heart has no ambition at all. But of what use is ambition unless we respond to its urging? If we form the habit of paying no attention to its prickings, we will soon cease to feel them, and then for us ambition will have ceased to exist.

Because it pays is the first reason I have advanced for the study of salesmanship. The selfish appeal is the one that hits most of us the hardest. When we are made to see that a thing will pay us, we go ahead and do it when we would not move a step just as a matter of duty.

There are, however, plenty of salesmen who acknowledge the higher reason for making good. There are more men than you think who appreciate the fact that there is more to life than the mere dollars and cents involved, who find a satisfaction in doing their work well for its own sake.

The man who determines to become a high-class salesman because he realizes it will pay him will, if he succeeds, remain high-class because it suits him, because he likes it. He will never willingly drop back into the time-serving class.

For a man to take a position as traveling salesman and refuse to study salesmanship is the same thing as for a medical student to refuse to study medicine. It is just as essential for the salesman

to study salesmanship as for an apprentice in a machine shop to study machinery.

If you decline to study the theory of selling and seek to learn it only through experience, you will be to the high-class salesman what the pettifogger is to the real lawyer.

A good many men try to get along the easy way because they are young and fail to realize the responsibilities of life. They think they will be young forever. It may do well enough to slip along without much effort now. Your employer may be willing to take a chance on you because you are young and he hopes that one of these days you will strike your gait. But unless you do strike your gait, you will find yourself without a job, and when a man has reached early middle age without showing ability he will find that employers are not anxious to put him on the payroll. Everybody knows that the man who is going to make good, who has it in him, will show what he can do before he shows any gray hairs on his head.

If you do slipshod work while you are a young man you will do slipshod work when you get older, because you will not know how to do anything else. Of course the fellow who does not try will be the low man on the list, and you know at which end of the payroll they begin when it becomes necessary to drop off a few names.

A man who is just about making his wages can be spared at any time without reducing the earnings of the business. A man who always sells enough goods to make a good net profit on his salary can never be spared.

It is not enough to consider the present. We must look into the future, and it does not require a prophet

to tell that the successful men of the future will be those who are studious boys today. The man who stands at the top ten or fifteen years from now will not be he who waited to learn it all by experience.

Look into the future! Even you who may have an independent income, and who work only to pass away the time, need to know how to work in an efficient manner. You can never become a successful boss unless you are a success as an employee. You hope to be in business for yourself eventually, or at least to be at the head of a selling force. You who have not first learned salesmanship, what would you do with a selling force under you?

There is nothing in this world any easier or cheaper to obtain than knowledge. There is plenty of it. You will never be troubled by a scarcity of available information. You find it everywhere, and the price is merely the inclination to get it. Study every source of information that comes before you, and if the sources do not appear as rapidly as you wish, hunt them up. Don't sit and wait for knowledge to come to you, to throw itself in your face. Go after it. Knowledge of your goods and of salesmanship are the foundations of your life success.

To let the opportunity go by with the thought that it is too much trouble to try, or with the idea that it takes more time and work than you can put into it, is to admit that you do not care enough about succeeding to try hard. And if you will not try, you will get no sympathy from anyone for failing. Your friends will let you go with a mere "Well, he was a darned good fellow all right, but he hadn't enough backbone to get him anywhere." If you want a "darned good fellow" tombstone on your grave, you

can get it by taking things easy and letting others walk past and over you. But if there is anything to you, you won't let the other fellows walk over you until you are "under six feet," and then they won't want to do it. You can keep ahead and on top by reading and study.

CHAPTER III

SALESMAN AND SALARY

IN the mind of the salesman himself, and in the mind of his employer, there is a constant and inevitable association of the individual salesman with the individual salary. It seems to be natural to think first of what the salesman is paid rather than of what he can do.

It ought not to be necessary to say that this is the wrong attitude. The man who is hiring salesmen ought to give primary consideration to what a man can do rather than to what he is to be paid. The salesman himself ought to think first of what he can do to make himself of value to his employer, rather than of what salary he is going to get. The amount of the salary is not nearly so important as the way it is earned.

The salary a man receives when he first starts in may perhaps be earned easily enough by merely doing what he is told to do in the way he is told to do it. He may succeed after a little experience in making sales sufficient to pay his salary without overexerting himself. But the man who is satisfied to earn only what he is paid will never get very far into big business. If a man is going to get beyond the rudimentary stages of salesmanship he will have to use every opportunity to earn more than he is paid.

The greatest difficulty confronting many manufacturers today is how to get the right kind of salesmen. There is no trouble in getting men who are honest, who will work full time, and who will keep sober.

Men who will technically obey orders are not so hard to find. The country is full of mediocre salesmen, but the mediocre ones will not carry the business to a great success.

In business it is a good deal as it used to be in school. We all remember plenty of scholars who were always on time, who always put up a pretty fair recitation and never made the teacher any trouble; but these were not the students who usually received the highest marks. They did not graduate at the head of the class.

We were likely to find at the head some fellow who played hard, who sometimes seemed to be full of the very devil, but who worked his head off to find ways to learn more. He was the chap who made the most mistakes, perhaps, but when examination time came around he was right there with the goods.

The men who get and keep the best positions in selling are not those who never make mistakes; they are not those who are fairly successful; not those who lack personality and individuality. They are the men who see that in order to get within sight of the top they must be more than mediocre. They know they must continue to grow, and they are willing to take chances now and then in order to do something that will prove more than ordinarily worth while.

The salesman is himself responsible for the amount of his salary. It is not the employer who fixes the salary and keeps it there. On the other hand, the man who is constantly questioning how he can get the boss to give him a raise, regardless of whether he is or is not entitled to it, is the last man on the

payroll whose salary goes up. He is lucky if it does not go down and out.

When a man is all the time earning more than he is paid he is sure to be paid more. If the present employer does not increase his salary, some other employer will see what he is doing and make him an offer. You cannot hide high-class salesmanship from your own or from other employers. It is bound to show.

If nobody else gives away the fact of your being a good salesman, the people to whom you sell goods are pretty apt to do it. Nobody appreciates the salesman's ability much better than the man who sees him in operation and who is the target of his fire.

The important buyer knows it when an inferior salesman calls upon him, and he is likely to turn him down just on account of his inferiority. We like to buy of people who know their goods and how to sell them.

The other day a man applied to a sales manager for a position on the road. He was asked what knowledge and experience he had, and he replied that for ten years he had been buying that line of goods, and that he knew so well the faults of the men who tried to sell them that he was sure he could eliminate those faults and make more money selling than he could buying. He was engaged for trial and he jumped almost at once to the position of high man. He knew the faults of salesmen and he took care to avoid them.

But even if you were to learn all the faults of the salesmen in your line and then avoid them all, if you never studied constructive salesmanship you would not necessarily find yourself a successful salesman.

There is always an easiest way of getting rid of faults, but that easy way is not necessarily the right way. By following the method that gained for William of Orange the nickname "William the Silent" you can cure yourself of the habit of "knocking." But while silence may have been all right for William, for a salesman, as Perlmutter would say, "silence is nix."

Nor would it do to cure yourself of the fault of careless dressing by following the example of Adam in the Garden of Eden. You must wear clothes and you must use care to keep them clean and in style. You owe it to yourself and to your employer to use enough of your salary for clothes to enable you to do your house credit in that way.

Impoliteness cannot be profitably cured by a mere Chesterfieldian politeness in agreeing with everything anybody says. You cannot agree with all that your customers say and make sales.

To try to get rid of one fault by going to the opposite extreme is merely to replace one fault with another.

Nothing about your efforts to get rid of a fault is of more importance or of greater value than the fact that you show that you want to be rid of it. If you care enough to try, you will be benefited by the effort, even though you do not wholly succeed.

But, getting back to the salesman and his pay, when we find a man who thinks about his pay too constantly we find one who thinks it is too little. When we find a man who is all the while complaining that his salary is too small, we are pretty likely to have found a man who is not living within his

income. It is the man who is not living on his salary who worries most about its size.

The salesman whose salary pays his living expenses and a little more, even though those expenses are not as great as those of the man who spends more than he earns, is not going to waste much time worrying about the size of his salary. If he thinks it too small he will get busy and earn more, and then it will be paid him.

It is not the amount of salary a man gets that makes him a good salesman. What makes a man successful is what is in the man rather than what is in his pay envelope. If you are not giving your best efforts to your employer at your present salary, neither would you give them at a salary fifty per cent higher. In any event it is necessary for you to show yourself worth more money before you get it rather than afterward. The advance you want will not come until it is earned.

A temporary whirlwind selling effort may speed up results for a short time, but after such an effort you may wonder why you are not immediately given a raise. Bear in mind that a man is judged by his year's work, by his sales week in and week out—not by what he can do under the stimulus of a temporary exertion. The man who tries to convey the impression, by a tremendous burst of speed for fifty yards, that he can run a mile in record time, will not fool anybody, least of all the timekeeper.

It is the salesman who keeps doing a little better and a little better all the time—getting a few steps nearer the top every month—who will get attention and a reward for his high average. The fellow with the short spurt will also be judged by his average.

Probably you are technically correct when you say it is nobody's business how you spend the money you earn. I have no right to institute any investigation of the matter, and neither has your boss as long as you are apparently honest in handling the money belonging to the house. But the way you spend your salary is going to have a good deal to do with your eventual success.

You have to spend a certain amount on your running expenses. This is practically a fixed sum. The important thing is what you do with the balance; for there must be a balance if you are a good business man. Some of this must be saved each year. Life insurance, of course, comes first as a means of saving, particularly when there now is or is likely to be anyone dependent upon you. After this the purchase of a good bond now and then is a wise choice.

Don't neglect to include among your regular expenses for each year something for increased knowledge. Buy some business literature every year—and read it carefully to get your money out of it.

It is the money spent for amusements, for booze, for tobacco, for worthless literature, that is wasted. You need to spend something on recreation, particularly of the outdoor sort, but this need not be wasted. Avoid luxuries until you get to where your financial future is assured. Of course you probably will not do this, but you will no doubt live to wish you had.

If you are the kind of man to take a job as a sort of filler because you do not know just what you do want to do, just what you are worth, you will not find any position very satisfying financially. The position you take as a filler you will find is not very

filling. Be a success at what you are doing, even though you are hoping and planning for something different later.

If you are not getting the salary you think you deserve appoint yourself an investigating committee to consider the situation carefully. Investigate yourself. Find out first whether you are worth more than you are getting — whether your actual sales entitle you to a larger share of the profits of the business. If you can satisfy yourself that you ought to have more pay, then set about getting it. If you find you are not yet entitled to more, then begin further back.

To get more when you are satisfied you deserve it, find out whether the boss agrees with you about it or not. Find out whether he also thinks you deserve it. If he does, he will give it to you if he can afford to do so, and if he cannot afford it he will agree with you that you ought to be looking for a position with better opportunities.

If you find the boss will not admit that you are entitled to a larger salary while you are sure you are, discuss the matter in a friendly way from every point of view. Find out how far you are apart and why.

If you are working for a man who believes in squeezing his salesmen dry for the lowest possible wage, leave him at the first good chance. An honest and fair-minded sales manager will always talk over the salary matter without bias or quibbling, and there is no reason why the matter of salary should not be as freely and as frankly discussed as the matter of price is between you and your customers. Don't be always asking for more money, but when you do

take the matter up do it thoroughly though agreeably. You have something to sell in parting with your services just as you have in taking orders for goods.

CHAPTER IV

THE SALESMAN'S MENTAL ATTITUDE

DOES your work look good to you, or did you never stop to think how it looks?

You may have considered the mental attitude of the man who has to leave the house at a quarter to seven every morning to be on the job when the whistle blows. You may have wondered about the thoughts of the merchant behind his counter. You may even have given thought to the possible feelings of the buyer whose ear you are trying to reach. Your mind may have wandered in any or all of these directions without having consciously turned to your own position.

Some men seem to dislike particularly to investigate what is in their own minds. They seem to be afraid of what they may find there. If this should be your case it might serve as an explanation of your failure to advance faster.

This fear of what is in your own mind is the same thing as being afraid to have a physical examination lest you should find yourself possessed of some dreaded disease.

What would you think of a man who never had the engine of his automobile examined for fear there would be something found wrong with it, or a need discovered for repairs?

You would class such a man as foolish and worse. And you would put in the same class the man afraid to have his body examined for defects. In what way is the man different who will not dig down into his

own mind? And how does it help the situation any if you are that man?

The man who takes no mental inventories cannot know whether he is increasing his store of knowledge or not, or whether he is developing in efficiency. He has no way of knowing whether he is really a better man this year than he was last year. His sales record may show whether he has sold more goods or less, and in a way that may indicate growth, or lack of it, but to know one's self, to know whether there has been a real inside development, requires self-investigation.

And so we come back to one of the questions a man may well ask himself, and that is, whether his work looks inviting to him or repellant. When a man's work looks interesting and inviting, when it seems to beckon him on to greater efforts, it develops deeper enthusiasms and a better sustained energy.

The man who never thinks about his work will never care enough about it to consider what his mental attitude toward it may be. He may sell a lot of goods because he has the right kind of goods to sell, or because he possesses a pleasing personality, or because his predecessor has built up for him a big trade; but without the deeper mental qualifications and a corresponding interest he cannot get a hold on his trade that will stand in the face of red-hot competition.

There are many men who cannot find any pleasure in their own society; men who must have companionship in order to keep from being unhappy. They may have that on their minds which they are afraid to face, or they may have nothing at all on their minds and so grow lonesome as soon as left by them-

selves. If you have something on your mind that troubles you when you have to face it, you can do no better than to replace it with thoughts of your work. If you have nothing at all in your mind, the more shame to you! Get some thoughts about your work planted there, and give them a chance to grow by giving them proper attention.

The man who never gives his work any thought at all might well be replaced with a machine, for a machine can do better than a man almost any kind of work which is done without thought.

Think about your work, then, and take account of how much you think about it, and consider whether that is enough to give it. In thinking about your work, direct your thoughts in some useful way. To give up all one's thought to one's work is of no avail if that thought is merely devoted to wondering how soon a certain call can be made, or how quickly a certain order can be taken, or what is the first train to be caught. It is a mistake to think about work mainly from the point of view of wondering how soon it can be finished.

Everything else being equal, the rapid worker is of course the best man; but everything else is not equal. You cannot do your work the quickest of any man sent out by the house, and do it the best too. If you work steadily without wasting time or energy, your work will move along as fast as it ought to move. Try to hurry, and while you may do the thing in hand more quickly, you will not put the desired efficiency into your work as a whole.

Working hard and fast merely to get through quicker is getting away from efficiency instead of toward it. It is the workman again watching the

clock, looking only for the moment when he can quit work.

Work that has no other interest for you save that of seeing how soon you can stop, is not work that will produce for you or for your employer. The workers of all kinds, whether salesmen or coal-heavers, should always have one primary object in mind, the accomplishment of the best results.

Look over your list of acquaintances in all walks of life and see if it is not true that practically everyone who has succeeded notably has been the kind of fellow who has done his work the best he could, rather than the quickest he could.

This is a day of "snappy work." We make a fetish of speed, and in going so far we sometimes forget that a ball player who has nothing but snap to recommend him lacks everything except a fundamental attribute which may be turned to advantage only if he learns to be accurate as well as fast. Speed is of high value, but right methods, right mental attitude, accuracy, efficiency, should be developed first, and then the work increased in speed by degrees.

Not the least important part of the influence of mental attitude is the way we impress others regarding our work.

We may slouch through the day's work and have a few orders at night, and if we have put up a good bluff we think our customers have not noticed that we didn't care a continental about the business. We fool ourselves and only ourselves. Our customers, if they are men whose opinions we would value, know it well enough when we do not feel an interest in what we are doing.

If we are not sincere in our enthusiasm about our line, we cannot convey the impression of enthusiasm, at least not for long. If we are trying to fool ourselves and those buyers whose opinions we value, we might be benefited by hearing their opinions of us, though it would not cause us to chuckle with satisfaction while listening to them.

Would you rather have your house painted by a man whose sole idea was to cover as much surface as possible in a day without regard to whether it was properly covered or not, or by a painter who took a pride in his ability to put a good, even coat over the whole job? Who wouldn't prefer the work of a man taking pride in the way he does his work to that of a man whose boast is that he gets through in record time?

If we regard salesmanship as different from other occupations in that it seems excusable to rush operations through rather than to spend on them all the time necessary for the best results, we are making a mistake. Salesmanship requires as painstaking effort as the painting of miniatures. Detail is the very life and success of it, and detail and rush are two things that are about as compatible as gasoline and live coals.

If you do not seem able to discover just what your mental attitude is, if you do not know just how to go about investigating it, I would suggest a most rudimentary method. Take the medicine every hour. Make it a rule for a week to open a note book every even hour and set down the thought found uppermost in the mind when the hour strikes. At the end of a week there will be an interesting study of mental attitudes which may open your eyes to your tendencies

of thought. You may discover what others have known all along about the trend of your mind.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." It does not say, "As a man thinks he thinks." It is the set of actual, bottom, even subconscious thoughts that governs a man's mental attitude. The surface thoughts are the effect of the state of the mental substrata, rather than the cause.

Haven't you gone into a buyer's office and listened to the man talk for fifteen minutes, knowing all the while that you were not getting a thing he was really thinking? And haven't you yourself talked in that same way to people, carrying on a conversation that did not have anything to do with what was in your mind? Certainly. And isn't it likely that you have sometimes deceived yourself into thinking that the things you talked about were the things you thought about?

The fact that you put in so many hours a day talking about the particular sort of goods you are selling does not prove that your mind is on those goods or on the selling of them. Don't deceive yourself into thinking that the words of your mouth are the thoughts of your mind, because often they are not, and people who are at all acute in their perceptive powers will not think they are.

CHAPTER V

UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER

THE salesman who is to be successful needs to understand the house for which he works and the goods that he sells, but that is not enough. He needs to understand the people to whom he expects to sell those goods.

The buyers of any class of goods have their peculiarities as a class in addition to their individual peculiarities. They must be studied from their own point of view as users as well as from the salesman's point of view as purchasers.

One can scarcely know too much about the idiosyncrasies of the man with whom he is to do business. We have all experienced the difficulties that come with failure to understand an acquaintance who is rough and gruff by nature, but who means nothing by his abruptness, who is kindly underneath and thinks no harm in speaking out sharply and plainly. We are likely to take offense at first at such manners, only to find out afterward that they are only the rough bark covering the smooth wood underneath.

There are, of course, buyers like that, men who seem to take a delight in verbally snapping off the heads of salesmen whom they do not know well. While the salesman who has been calling on such a man for some time learns to know his habit, and the man himself softens somewhat under acquaintance, it is a part of salesmanship to recognize the crusty buyer at first sight, and, instead of being over-

awed and even cowed by his manner, to take it for what it is worth.

Once in a while such a man needs to be talked to in his own style in order to produce a prompt respect for his visitor, but to make the mistake of snapping back at a man who means his ill-natured flings is likely to be fatal to the prospects of developing a business relationship.

I do not mean to say that it is easy to understand a customer's peculiarities at first sight. Quite the reverse. This understanding the customer is the most difficult part of the headwork of salesmanship.

To walk into the place of business of an entire stranger and judge him at once by his appearance, recognizing his type and seeing behind what he says, requires an expert in psychology, physiognomy and the other allied sciences. One does not become an expert in anything at a moment's notice. It requires years of experience and study. Some of us pick up such things more quickly than others, but after all a good deal depends upon how hard we try to learn and how much time and energy we devote to studying.

There are books on psychology in its relation to selling goods, and books on character study. Most salesmen regard such things as superficial, as beyond the needs of practical salesmanship, but there is nothing more practical than a sound theory. If you learn the theory of understanding the customer, you will find it a simple matter to apply that theory.

The salesman who understands his customer will not tread on his toes, metaphorically or otherwise. He will defer to his opinions, though standing by his own in the main. He will avoid expressing offend-

ing opinions and he will steer clear of dangerous subjects.

Almost every big buyer is a man of intelligence on general topics, on the current affairs of the day, and, having the energy that has developed him into the business success that he is, he no doubt has strong feelings on most public questions.

To drift into casual conversation with such a man and to condemn off-hand any point of view without hearing first what side he takes, is one way to alienate his business affections.

The dangerous *argument* must be kept out of conversation with a customer, because it can only result in a lessening of respect and of friendship. The salesman is the one to keep the conversation away from argumentative dangers, because he is the party who has something at stake. The customer does not care. He may even be anxious to get into an argument. There are many men who like nothing better than a verbal scrap. But always remember this: The ability to best your man in an argument is no part of successful salesmanship.

When you find a man who seems to want to bring up certain favorite subjects for discussion, let him bring them up. It is the part of tact to get into a man's good graces by talking part of the time about the things he wants to discuss. And it is not necessary always to agree with him. You need not stultify yourself by professing to endorse principles in which you do not believe. On the other hand, never take an arbitrary stand on the other side.

The understanding of customers involves an understanding of why they decline to buy. The reasons given are sometimes mere excuses and perhaps far

from the actual underlying reason. Asking will not uncover it, but a tactful discussion of the situation may give you an insight if you keep your mind attentive.

In order to make headway against a man's objections to buying, it is absolutely necessary to know what is his real reason for refusing. To uncover this when the customer is trying to conceal it calls for tact and knowledge. In order to understand the customer's attitude, you must first understand his business. The salesman ought to know more than a little about the proper methods of operating any business with which he comes in contact.

This kind of knowledge makes it possible occasionally to give a prospective customer pointers and suggestions that will create a favorable impression and even place him under acknowledged obligations.

The traveling salesman who keeps his eyes open and notices the improved methods in use wherever he goes can often make capital of the information thus picked up by passing it along to others. He must, however, exercise care not to make his suggestions in such a way that the recipient will think him out of place in giving unsought advice. Here one must understand the customer in order to know just how to offer tips of this sort so they will be accepted.

Some buyers like to buy from a man they know and like personally. They are cold and unresponsive with the comparative stranger. Purchasing is with them a matter of friendship and the personal element is uppermost. Other buyers make their buying a strictly impersonal matter and pride themselves on not allowing friendship to interfere. Isn't it pretty

important that the man selling the goods know to which of these types his prospective customer belongs?

To put too much effort into becoming personally intimate with the man who likes to make his buying a cold-blooded proposition may prove to be a fatal mistake, prejudicing him unnecessarily. To make selling a strictly business matter with the cordial, friendly, sociable buyer is also very bad policy, for he will lose no time in looking for a salesman with a more nearly human attitude.

Occasionally there is a buyer who takes the attitude that he is a higher-class business man than the salesmen and that he condescends when he patronizes them. Such a man is almost insufferable, but it is all in the day's work, and a good order is a good order whether from such a man or from another.

It may be a satisfaction to walk out of a buyer's office with head up and the hope that he will learn that he is no better than some other folks, but this satisfaction is an expensive luxury. Maintaining dignity at the expense of orders is unprofitable.

No matter what his habitual attitude toward salesmen may be, every customer is subject to moods. He may be "off his feed"; he may have quarreled with his wife before he came to business; he may be worried. Many things may put a man out of humor, and the salesman cannot always choose his time and avoid such occasions. He must call when he can and he ought to keep his weather eye open when he enters, or even before, for anything that will give him an understanding of the situation.

Some men who can be treated pretty severely under ordinary circumstances have to be handled with

gloves at such times. It requires more care and more tact to get under a customer's belt when he is disgruntled or peevish.

A pretty complete knowledge of human nature is necessary to the salesman who is determined to understand his customers and to learn how to get on with them. Human nature can be studied at any time in any company. It can be studied on the train, in the hotel, at home, in the company's offices, by simply observing people's appearance and actions and speculating upon their mental processes. No fact discovered about human nature in general will be wasted in salesmanship. The better your understanding of humanity, the better will be your understanding of customers.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT CUSTOMERS WANT

WHAT customers want and what they get ought to be one and the same thing if you expect to retain their good will and hold their business. When the salesman thinks he knows more than the buyer himself about what the buyer wants, the probalilities are that it is the salesman and not the buyer who is mistaken.

There may be instances when it is not good policy to sell the customer the thing he wants, when it is better to displease him by showing him he is wrong than to please him by selling him, but those occasions are few.

In order to sell a man what he wants, it is first necessary to find out what he does want. You cannot know what customers want unless you are perfectly familiar with your goods. The inexperienced salesman, because of lack of knowledge of goods and their uses, can not know what the buyer wants even when the buyer himself tells his wants.

What the customer wants is what will help him in his business. He wants the article that will give the best service for the money, or the goods that will sell quickest. He may be anxious to buy as cheaply as he can, but if he can save money or make more money by buying a better grade of goods, he wants the better grade. That the buyer declines to buy the better grade, that he offers objections to paying the price, is not an indication that he does not want the best. It means only that he does not feel that the

business will afford the higher cost at the time, or that he does not believe the better goods are worth the difference in price. We all really want the best. When we refuse it, it is because of some other reason than a lack of preference for it.

It is because of this universal desire for the best that the salesman is generally justified in trying to raise the quality of a buyer's purchases.

Sometimes when a higher grade of product is urged upon the customer against his better judgment, it may prove to his ultimate disadvantage because he is not in the financial position to handle the higher-priced proposition. Most of us can be urged into action against our better judgment if sufficiently expert and sophisticated argument is used in the effort. But a buyer does not like to be bullyragged into buying better goods, no matter how much he may want them. He wants to be allowed to use his own judgment, and he wants respect shown that judgment.

One thing we all demand and appreciate when we are buying, and that is courteous and respectful treatment. We want polite salesmanship almost as much as we want good goods. Many a business has fallen to the ground merely because behind the best possible goods there was the worst possible salesmanship—the thinnest veneer of politeness over solid selling selfishness.

This courtesy and politeness and thoughtfulness that all buyers demand is an important part of what is comprehended nowadays under the name of service. People who buy, whether it be a newspaper from the boy on the street, or an automobile from the palatial headquarters of a metropolitan distributor, want service.

The houses that are getting the business away from their competitors are getting it more because of their service than because of their goods. Good service may make up in some degree for poor goods, but poor service will not be atoned for by good goods. Service of the best sort continues as long as the goods last. It is not merely politeness in taking the order or in accepting payment.

The salesman cannot give the buyer the service that continues after the sale of the goods. It is not a part of his work under ordinary circumstances, but he can explain the service and he can do something toward seeing that it is rendered. Many buyers are diffident about asking for service after they have bought. If something goes wrong with equipment after it has been bought and paid for and put into use, the diffident buyer is very likely to charge the loss up to experience and buy elsewhere next time—unless he has been given to understand that he is expected to come back with complaints when there is reason for them. Complaints are always more desirable to a manufacturer than glum silence.

Find out to the last and to the least detail just how much and what service your house is willing to give with the goods you are selling. Then tell all your customers about that service that they may know what to expect. They want to know and they have a right to know.

To explain the service of the house to one buyer and give him full value in it, while letting another buyer shift for himself after he has bought, is to discriminate between the two, and it means that when this discrimination is found out by the one who suffers from it, his trade will be lost forever. When it is

discovered by the man who did receive service, his confidence in the house will be shaken.

A house with a policy of giving service of certain kinds only when the customer insists upon it is a house that is not treating all customers alike, and only one thing can happen to a business managed continuously on that basis.

The interest that buyers feel in service is so great that emphasis on this feature when seeking the business of a new customer is often as important as it is to interest him in the goods themselves. In fact, mention of advantages in the way of service may be a short cut to getting attention to the goods.

The buyer wants to feel that he is doing business with a man who will not take advantage of him. The only way you can create such a feeling is by living up to that principle. It requires time to develop such confidence, and when you are working with a new customer you cannot expect him offhand to lay aside all precautions and trust you implicitly. You would not yourself take anything for granted in doing business with a stranger.

Don't be offended if a buyer insists upon all the protective details he can think of. It is not that he has any personal distrust of you, but rather that sometime, perhaps, he has been over-trustful. He wants to be sure that his expectations about the order are going to be fulfilled, that his understanding of the matter is correct. He has a perfect right to want everything down in black and white.

Buyers will often ask for more than they expect, or perhaps for even more than they really want in the way of service or values. Close buyers insist upon things never thought of by their less shrewd

brothers. But after the order is signed, many of these things the buyer talked about wanting may be forgotten. After that he wants only what you have agreed to give him, what you give other buyers under similar conditions.

We all want our rights, and some of us are very jealous of them. No one feels like continuing to do business with a house that shows any tendency to defraud him of part of those rights, even though it gives him his money's worth of goods.

One of the important things the customer wants is a reputation behind the goods he buys. As a salesman, you can help with this reputation. You can see that you never give your goods or your house more reputation than they can live up to. You can see that you do spread abroad every cent's worth of reputation that is warranted.

The user of an adding machine or a handsaw feels a pride in the reputation of that article. You who own a well-known automobile of good make take a pride in telling people the name of the maker. It is the same with other things. Of course it is largely up to the house, the manufacturer, to create this reputation by advertising and by service and by quality of the product, but it is up to you as a salesman to exhibit the reputation and to exalt it by what you say about it and about the goods. A salesman who shows no enthusiasm over his line may easily convey to a buyer the suggestion that after all this so-called famous line is nothing unusual. The buyer cannot help taking his cue from the salesman. The customer cannot be expected to think more highly of the goods than does the man selling them.

A customer wants to think well of what he buys.

He wants to be assured by the salesman that all he has heard about the goods is true, and more besides. He wants his faith confirmed. A lukewarm salesman will produce the reverse of this desired impression. Many a buyer has had "cold feet" about his purchase just because of some careless remark made by the salesman after closing the deal. If the buyer, after buying, grows to feel that the goods are not going to be right, they will have to be better than their reputation in order to give satisfaction.

The things the buyer wants may be a good many, but they can all be reduced to a few general terms. He wants good goods. He wants good service. He wants to be sure he will get what he wants.

You, as a salesman, can supply him with good goods, or if you cannot, you can change to a manufacturer of the right kind.

You, as a salesman, can supply him with a good selling service yourself, and you can promise him only what service you are sure he will get.

You, particularly, can make the buyer sure he will get what he wants. Your own manner, your method of presenting your line, your appearance, your conversation—all these will help to convince the customer that he is doing business with the right kind of people, that he is going to get what he wants and what is promised him.

Every now and then I notice on an order blank a statement to the effect that no verbal statements or promises made by salesmen and not incorporated in the order will be recognized by the house. This always causes me to wonder what kind of salesmen that house thinks it has. The statement on the blank is perfectly right and proper, but cannot you as a

salesman so conduct yourself that it will not be necessary for the sales manager to have you hand to your customers a note saying that you are not to be trusted unless you put into writing all that you promise?

The customer wants to do business with men he can trust. Be first a man the house can trust, and then a man your customer can trust. If the house shows it trusts you the customer will the more quickly feel the same degree of confidence.

CHAPTER VII

KEEPING UP THE CUSTOMER LIST

UNLIKE the retail salesman, it is up to the traveling salesman to go out and find his customers. They do not come to him. And while the retail salesman usually makes a sale to the customer the first time he comes in, the traveling salesman must expect to be rebuffed perhaps time and again before he succeeds in getting an order. He must therefore be armed with a persistence and an optimism without which the clerk in a store may be able to succeed.

Successful salesmanship, of course, does not begin and end with selling goods to the men who are waiting and ready to buy. It must concern itself with developing into buyers those who have never before been customers or who have never been customers at all for the kind of goods you have to sell.

The man with a line that is new to his trade, or one having a new use or intended to replace an old and well-established line, must necessarily do a great deal of missionary work before he can expect large sales. Any well-trained salesman can do this missionary work. He knows the uses of his product. He knows its advantages and its economies. Insofar as all this technical part is concerned, all the salesmen on the road representing good houses are about on a par.

But in the personal qualities of the salesman and in the way he makes use of them lies all the difference between success and failure. You, as a salesman, can make yourself just about what you will,

because you have the ability to climb to the top, and the ladder is waiting. It is up to your persistence and energy.

One salesman goes into a buyer's place, a perfect stranger, and so acts that he never gets a hearing, killing all his future chances there. Another, as much a stranger, so demeans himself that he gets a chance to tell his story and leaves under such conditions that he knows he will get another chance the next time.

There is something about the coming of a salesman who is new to the territory that causes the buyer to set up a barrier around himself. He is about as receptive to his caller as a bristling porcupine. The new man has his way to win in every case. There is no glad hand out for him, and no order awaiting his coming.

Strange as it may seem, not a few traveling men become disagreeable if the buyer does not give them the chance they want to explain their proposition. They walk into a stranger's place of business, and because he says he is too busy to talk to them they practically accuse him of lying by acting as if they knew his talk about being busy was all a bluff. They try to force a hearing, and when they fail in this, they leave in an open or concealed but nevertheless apparent huff.

One of the first rules in the book ought to be, "Never get disgruntled." When a salesman has learned to keep pleasant in spite of all the slights put upon him, he has taken a long step on the road to success. He has made it possible to go out of any man's office and leave him an open prospect for future business.

I do not mean for a minute to uphold the buyer who treats salesmen rudely. Rudeness has no more excuse for existence in one man than in another; no more in a buyer than in a seller. But rude buyers do exist, and the salesman cannot afford to take notice of every unpleasant feature in his treatment if he is trying to develop strangers into buying friends.

I have had salesmen go right up in the air and tell me I did not know my business, because, as a buyer, I refused them time to show their samples. It is seldom a buyer absolutely refuses a salesman a hearing unless there is a good reason for it. It is not given to salesmen to know what demands there may be on a buyer for time at the moment of their call. It is up to them to appear to believe what the buyer says. Of course it is not good salesmanship to shut right up and walk out the moment a man says he is busy. But when the buyer states absolutely that he cannot give you time, and when he cannot be induced to make a later appointment, have the grace and the good sense to take him at his word, and thus leave the door open for your next call.

When you have become well acquainted with a buyer, it may do to run in on one train and out on the next, and put it up to him to have his order in such shape that you can get it between trains. I say it *may* do, but even though that buyer may accommodate you, it is very likely there will be in his mind a thought that you are taking advantage of your position and that it needs a little competition to make you more willing to work for your money. The fact that a concern is now buying from you does not make it unnecessary to continue to develop that same firm as

a buyer. The National Cash Register people consider their best prospects people who have already bought, and your best work in developing prospective sales may well be done with those who are already regular customers.

It is often possible to find good prospects outside the beaten path. Are you looking up these chances? Are you taking pains, when you find a man who might profitably branch out into handling your kind of goods, to educate that man along that line and to encourage him to take it up? If you can get a dealer or a manufacturer into some new branch of work, something you have reason to believe will be profitable for him, you have a chance to make him a lifelong customer.

It takes time to develop such a customer, but if you locate him in a town where you habitually have to waste an hour or two on train service, you can afford that time.

Another possibility is that of finding a small buyer in a town you have not been thinking worth making, and by educational work, suggesting improvements and telling him what others have done, getting him started on the road to bigger business. The man you help in this way will be yours forever, and no matter how many times you may change base, he is very likely to be willing to change with you.

The man who is anxious to develop prospects must have an open ear and an observant eye. I have known traveling men to pick up good prospects in towns they had not been making, just by noting signs from the car windows, setting down in an ever-ready note book names to be looked up later in Dun or Bradstreet.

There should be a book in your pocket all the while ready for the name of anyone who might be induced to handle your product. A name overheard, a name suggested by a fellow traveling man, a name secured by visiting with someone from a town you do not make, a name seen in a local newspaper—any such name may be that of your prospect.

One salesman I know buys the local newspaper in every town he enters and reads the personal columns as well as the advertisements in search of men who may be or may become possible customers. He studies openings in towns where there is a possible opportunity, and he puts the right men in touch with them. He visits with representatives of the local commercial organizations and advertising clubs and gathers much information that he tabulates in a pocket notebook. He always has at hand information of value to men in his line of trade, and in time they come to realize it and look forward to his coming, saving him some kind of an order even if they are not much in need, because they want a chance to talk with him.

Many salesmen call on their trade only at long intervals. In that case it might ordinarily take many years to impress one's personality upon a prospect, and a salesman ought to use the mails to keep himself before his buyers. He should take time to write them, very briefly of course, mentioning any new thing he thinks of real interest and value to them. But there is nothing to be gained by writing merely for the sake of writing any more than in talking merely for the sake of talking.

Form letters sent out by the house, even if the salesman's name is signed to them, will not accom-

plish the purpose of getting that salesman an acquaintance or of impressing his personality upon prospects. The salesman himself should take time when he can to typewrite or to dictate the letters he wants to send, giving them a personal and yet a strictly business tone. They should indicate his appreciation of the individuality of the buyer, even though he does not really expect the buyer to recall him at first.

All this that I am suggesting takes time, of course. The more of it the salesman does, the more time it will take. But it may be set down for a fact that success is the outgrowth of hard work more than of ingenuity.

The man who develops no new prospects, who depends upon a certain line of established customers, no matter how large and profitable that line, is going to do a gradually diminishing business. Any given list of customers will decrease every year unless new names are added. Buyers will die or change firms, being replaced by men with personal alliances of their own among salesmen. Many houses will go to the wall. There will be changes in policies, reductions in business, strikes, panics, and many other influences, all working to reduce the sales.

You must keep adding new customers, recruiting from a list of prospects. You must keep adding new prospects from which to recruit. I am almost impelled to say that the securing of a good prospect is more important than making a big sale.

It is hard work to develop a non-user of your line into a user. It takes time and energy, and consequently it costs money. But can a user who is a regular buyer from another house be made into a customer of your own house without time and energy

and money? If any prospect is hard to land, it is he who is tied up to another house.

The salesman who wants to put a buyer on his regular customer list must lose no opportunity to be of service to that buyer, but of course such service must carry with it no unsought obligation. Such work must be done with tact and discretion. Though there are those who buy only where an obligation compels them to buy, that class is fast disappearing.

Keep your relations with buyers ostensibly on a strictly business basis, but don't lose a chance to develop an undertone of friendliness that will have the effect of getting orders for you and keeping them away from the other fellow, when everything else is equal.

The man who can make friends easily can make prospective purchasers. The personal methods of the salesman are what get him started right with a man, and the success or failure of your salesmanship with new or with old customers will depend largely on whether your individual methods are attractive or not.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ENTERING WEDGE

SOME salesmen have difficulty in making a beginning with any buyer, and some buyers make it difficult for any salesman to make a beginning. One of the most difficult phases of salesmanship is getting an entering wedge started with a buyer who resents being shown.

It is very essential that the salesman understand the buyer's point of view in the first place. If you are going to sell to a man who objects to buying, you must find out why he does not want to buy, and oftentimes he himself will not give you a clue to the real reason. He may give you what he expects to pass as the reason, but it may bear little or no relation to the actual facts.

It is necessary to learn to look beneath the surface in order to know where to start the entering wedge. When a man says he is all stocked up with your kind of goods, it may be that he has promised the representative of another house to give his line a trial, or it may be he has found a place where he can buy cheaper and wants to let you down easily.

Now, you ought not to need to be let down easily. You ought to be able to stand a sudden jar once in a while, and it is important that you know the facts. You cannot hope to get behind the buyer's defense until you find its weak point.

Here is a man who perhaps has been buying a line from you for years. All of a sudden he begins to tell you regularly every trip that he is stocked up.

After a few trips you realize that it was not you who stocked him up so that he would never need any more of your goods. He is taking the easiest way to end your visit each time. Such questions as you see fit to ask in a tactful way do not produce the information you want—why he will not buy from you any longer? He has not changed houses without a reason. Ingenuity may serve to discover where he is buying. You must find out whether it is price or some other inducement that has switched him. You can easily enough find out how your goods compare in quality. Probably you have as good a line as anyone. In that case, quality is not the explanation. You can find out whether the other house has a cleverer salesman; whether he has a pull; in a word, whether it is a case of the personal element beating you. It may be that the salespeople, the clerks, have said they cannot sell your line, claiming it does not give satisfaction, or they may report to the proprietor that another line is being called for to the exclusion of any demand for yours. Whatever you find out, you must adjust your attack to match the real reasons rather than the reasons offered.

If you find employees claiming a false advantage for some other line or brand, ask for an opportunity to demonstrate with your goods. Secure samples of all competing lines, including the offending one, lay them before the buyer and show wherein your own is superior. Don't make the mistake of singling out the one successful competitor, for that will put your buyer into an antagonistic mood. Make it your line against the field.

When it is a case of a competing salesman with a pull, show the buyer wherein the use of an inferior

product costs his house money—actual reductions in sales and profits. Ask him whether he believes your evidence of the loss that goes with inferior products. If he does not, he must give you a chance to prove your claims. If he does, he cannot turn you down.

There is a class of hide-bound buyers who have purchased the same line from the same manufacturer or jobber for so many years that they cannot seriously consider buying anywhere else. They think nothing is right unless it comes through that same regular channel. It is hard to break a buyer of the habits of a business lifetime, but it can be done. Persistent dropping of water will wear a hole in a stone, and even a slight tapping will eventually drive home a big nail if continued long enough.

Of course to smash the stone at one blow of the hammer looks much simpler than to wear it through with light taps, but you do not want the stone smashed. You can perhaps break down the buyer's defense at one rough blow, but if it ends your relations with that buyer, where is your advantage?

If you were selling tools and a buyer thought a certain manufacturer made the only good tools on the market, he could not in a minute be convinced to the contrary. The desired result must be secured bit by bit. Never miss seeing such a man each trip, and never fail to have some concrete evidence of the quality of your line to show him. If you get but a minute with him, use that minute to call attention to some special feature existing in your line and in no competing line. Show one of your products that has been given hard use and has stood up well. Ask him if the line he carries is giving as good service.

It is not difficult to arouse a man's curiosity by

showing him some physical object which has a real interest to anyone in the business. And once he is interested to know more, your wedge has been driven far enough to produce the desired opening.

The one thing the salesman should realize is that it is not enough merely to call on a buyer and say "Good morning," and then back out gracefully with a smile and a promise to call again next trip. Of course there should be a graceful withdrawal and a smile and an intention to come again, but that should not be all of the call. There should always be something presented in the way of a concrete fact so stated as to leave an impression on the hardest mind.

The salesman who always has something different to offer will surely secure an interest on the part of the men he visits. When they see him coming they will know that some bit of interesting, perhaps valuable information is going to be brought to their attention, and no good salesman will fail to sell in the end to a man whom he has interested regularly.

The time to strike for the buyer's interest is while his attention is held. The buyer who is busy, who does not intend to buy or even give the salesman a chance to tell his story, may give his real attention for but a moment, for just long enough to excuse himself or to express regret. Before he has expressed that regret, however, before he has offered that excuse, while it is yet lingering on the tip of his tongue, strike with your pointed, curiosity-arousing sentence. Present your exhibit with the accompanying explanation.

Do not depend upon haphazard or extemporaneous construction of sentences to be used in taking advantage of these one-minute opportunities. Know

what idea you want to convey and put that idea into the very fewest words that will convey it intelligently, so the listener cannot escape its full meaning. Reduce the statement to the lowest common denominator and state it distinctly and clearly so that nothing will be missed. Practice this statement until the words and the accompanying gestures and movements will have no flaw.

Where the prospective purchaser is difficult to reach in person, personal letters may prove to be the opening wedge. Such letters should invariably be short and to the point, and they should have some message to convey.

Every letter should have a point, and that point should not be concealed to be sprung in the last sentence as a surprise. Writing surprise letters may be all well enough between friends, but it does not avail in business.

If you cannot make an opening wedge of some fact or some point of interest connected with what you have to sell, perhaps you can show the buyer that you are interested in him by giving him a hint now and then of some way in which he can make a gain in business or make money in some of his operations.

You have chances now and then to know what is going on in the market in lines apart from those you handle. A friendly traveling man tells you that leather or tin or something else is going to advance. You are not selling goods in which the article quoted figures, but you know a prospective customer on your list who is using those lines, and a word to him by letter or by wire may enable him to save an appreciable sum. This places him in your debt—under an obligation to you. It is not policy for you to show

that you appreciate this fact. You will get better value out of the obligation if you do not make it obvious.

No business man who has received a distinct favor from another can maintain toward that other an attitude of aloofness. It is not necessary to claim the reward for such an act. It will come in due time if the recipient of the favor is worthy of having his favor sought.

Surprise a man with an unexpected knowledge of his business and with an unexpected interest in his affairs, and you will incline him more favorably toward you. This is a selfish world, and other business men expect us to be looking out for our own interest almost to an exclusive extent. When we show an interest in them we surprise them and interest them in spite of the barrier they have erected around themselves.

Of course we will find it difficult to maintain an appearance of unselfishness unless we possess the genuine feelings that go with it. Just as we cannot successfully pretend an enthusiasm we do not feel for a line of goods, so we cannot successfully pretend a real interest in the affairs of others, particularly when they are prospective customers.

The entering wedge may be started with a very fine edge, but, no matter how easily it may be started, unless it is persistently hammered, it will never produce an opening. The wedge is just the beginning. The hard work comes afterward. Don't stop with a mere beginning.

CHAPTER IX

GETTING ON WITH CUSTOMERS

THERE are about as many ways of getting on with people as there are people to get on with. Each individual requires a little different treatment, and it is an art to know how to handle them all, but it is an art any salesman can acquire to some degree.

Some find the simplest way of getting on with people is by keeping the mouth shut. The man who can remember to say nothing when he has nothing to say that will please his hearers is pretty certain to get on famously. But that is not all there is to it, just to get on without making enemies. That will not make sales or produce business. What we want to know is how to get on with people while inducing them to buy goods.

The salesman must keep his temper at all times. Anyone who cannot do business without getting angry about it has no right to pose as a salesman. To get angry at a customer, no matter how great the provocation, is to lose that customer almost certainly.

It is aggravating to have to take the accusations, amounting to insult, that sometimes come from disgruntled buyers, but then many things that are humiliating to one's pride do no real harm, and the man who wants to sell goods must pocket his pride a good many times.

A buyer is discussing an article which he tells you he can buy from your competitor much cheaper than you are quoting it. You compare it with your goods point for point. You see that yours are of a mani-

festly higher grade. You point out to the customer the differences, and you show him wherein your goods are worth their price and perhaps more too. He listens to it all, but he is not impressed. He says he will buy of your competitor. That is the culminating point with some salesmen. They go up in the air right there. With the successful salesman that is just where he gets his second wind and begins again. Instead of telling the customer to go the seventeen blue blazes to make his purchase, and thereby making the man so angry that no amount of advertising or salesmanship will ever get him back, he smiles and starts in to lay the foundation that will serve as a basis for getting future business even if it fails to land the present sale.

The man who has learned to keep his temper under all the trying circumstances that come up in the work of selling has something of which to be proud. He has made a good beginning in successful salesmanship. Learn to control your temper, even though it humiliates you.

The ability to remember names is of inestimable value in making it easy to get on with people. You know how you feel yourself, on entering a store, when your name is used in addressing you. It seems to give your visit an added importance. This trait, common to humanity, is one the salesman ought to play upon. He ought to remember the identity of as many people as possible, particularly among those who are possible customers. He ought to be able to call at least the regular customers by name, and he ought to do it.

It is just as easy to say, "Good morning, Mr. Brown," as it is to say merely, "Good morning,"

and it makes a great deal of difference with Mr. Brown's attitude. This is not imagination. As I said before, you know how it is with yourself.

Some business men have reduced to a fine point the art of getting on right with people in business deals, even though they could not make a friend when off duty if life depended upon it.

It is a mistake to let people find out that all you care about them is to get their money, and it is a mistake to feel that way. If that is all the love of humanity you can scare up, you are to be pitied. If it is not natural with you, then *learn* to like people for themselves. And don't be crabbed and unsociable outside of your business any more than you would be inside, for that will react on yourself as well as on your salesmanship.

Not every man can be a good mixer, but it is worth trying. The more friends a man makes outside of business hours, the more customers he will have inside of those hours. People like to buy from a man they know. It is worth while for every salesman to cultivate a wide personal acquaintance. I do not believe in a man joining fraternal organizations for the main object of helping business, but I do believe it is wise for him to mix up with his fellow citizens in public matters and show a friendly spirit and a helping hand whenever chance offers.

We all know when we meet a polite man and we all admire politeness, but we do not all try to acquire it. I remember a salesman whose politeness so impressed itself upon my mind that even now I think of him as the most courteous salesman I ever knew. I had my nose broken in a baseball game by an inshoot right off my own bat. It gave me two black

eyes for a week. About that time this salesman made one of his regular calls upon me. Everyone else I knew had asked me where I had been fighting, what the other fellow looked like, and so forth, and all had variously drawn on their funds of humor. As for this particular salesman, he never batted an eyelash when he saw me. If there was anything wrong with my countenance, it was as if he could not see it.

Of course in this instance it did not matter, but, even though I was not sensitive about my appearance, let me tell you I appreciated that man's courtesy. His attitude made an impression that lasted as long as he sought my orders.

Now, something of that sort of courtesy is what we all need in order to get on successfully with people. Many times the obvious expression or greeting may do no harm, but it does not at all follow that the polite and courteous exception will not do some good. It did in the instance cited.

Instead of being just average and avoiding offense, go far enough the other way to make a distinctly pleasing impression. Instead of being merely negatively polite, be positively so. Politeness easily becomes a habit, and even the boy who is not brought up to polite manners will soon acquire them if he associates with polite people.

It cannot be expected that the employee who works for an ill-mannered employer will develop for himself better manners than those of his employer. The employer is the logical example for the employee, and he cannot complain if faults which he does not try to correct in himself persist in cropping out in the salesman. Even the employee who is so excep-

tional as to realize that he must allow for his employer's imperfections will unconsciously imitate some of them in time. We cannot avoid being influenced.

The salesman who would get on with people must refrain from showing an excess of attention to one class and a lack of it to another. It is necessary that you be just as agreeable with the little fellow as with the biggest buyer on your list. A reputation for favoritism and for seeing only the men with the most money will spread a long way.

It will help you to get on with people to make yourself as attractive personally as you can. The man with a loud, strident voice will repel some people with that voice. It will pay him to learn to modify it, to get it toned down so it will sound agreeable. It may even be worth while to take vocal lessons for this purpose.

If you are not sure whether your voice is agreeable—and one cannot always tell—ask somebody who will be candid in telling you. Find out whether it grates harshly upon the ear of a stranger, whether it sounds cheerful or sort of homesick. Cheerfulness is a big asset with a salesman, and you never see a cheerful salesman with a woebegone voice.

Fitting one's self to get on with people is not an entirely simple matter. It means the study of character with a view to developing it for commercial purposes. It means going beneath the surface in a hundred ways. It also means cultivation of good qualities, right thinking and courtesy.

CHAPTER X

SHOWING THE GOODS

THERE are men on the road who seem to hate to show their goods. If they think they can squeeze an order out of a man without taking in their line of samples, they will leave the trunk at the depot and take their chances. Fortunately for employers, these men are few in number, and they are usually spotted before they have been trying very long to do business in that way.

It is more work, of course, to show the goods. To unpack a line of samples and display them—even to open up a small sample case and show what is in it, necessitates the taking of time and pains, and when a salesman is expert enough with his line of talk, he is often tempted to save himself the trouble that goes with showing his goods, especially when he has nothing new and knows he has shown the same line to that prospect before. But there is no buyer who remembers all about what any line looked like, no matter if he has seen it several times. A man can always buy more intelligently and he will always buy more liberally if he has the goods themselves right before him—unless there is something the matter with them that shows in the samples.

A salesman who calls on his trade every month and rarely has anything different in his sample trunk should still be ready and even anxious to open up the samples so that the buyer can see what he is ordering. The time taken in showing the samples gives more time in which to talk to the customer about the

advantages of the goods. It necessitates the buyer taking a little longer time and going more deeply into the matter, and this extra time is taken from him with his consent.

The buyer also gains an added respect for the goods if the salesman always seems to think they are worth showing. He certainly loses respect for them if the salesman himself does not appear greatly interested.

While a good many buyers are hard propositions, they are all human and hence likely to be affected by suggestion. Any action or lack of action on the part of the man pushing the goods, if it tends to show a lack of respect for the line or of pride in it, will detrimentally affect the buyer.

In some lines samples are impossible—that is, samples of the whole finished product. It is not feasible, for instance, to carry samples of flywheels, pieces of machinery, vehicles, etc. Salesmen handling such bulky lines must sell largely from catalogs, photographs, blueprints and other specifications. But there is always something the salesman can carry to *show*. He can carry a sample part if he cannot carry a full sample. Any kind of picture adds seeing to hearing as an aid to your appeal, but when you show something tangible, some actual object, you enlist eyes and hands and bring them to the aid of ears in getting your message across.

Samples of raw material used, or small models, or improved parts—all these are effective. A good salesman carries such things, but there are some who do not recognize their importance. Too many houses are dependent upon the glib tongue of a representative. Buyers like to be shown. They like to see

something and they like to see it without having to ask to be shown.

No matter how attractive the catalog may be, no matter how much care is used in making the cuts for the illustrations, the fact remains that no picture can show an article as it can be seen if itself placed right in the hands of the customer.

Not only is it possible always to have a sample of some kind to show, but on each trip there should be something new. It is not necessary to add new items in order to give variety to your line, but there is always some different part that can be taken, or some partly finished section from the incomplete article that can be used to show construction or material. The salesman who wants to show his goods, who is really anxious to have some concrete article to put into the hands of his prospect, can find that article if he will try. Let him go into the manufacturing department every time he is in the house and hunt up something new and interesting to take with him.

Sometimes carrying a sample to show will necessitate heavy lifting here and there, and sample cases are often heavy things, but salesmanship will be better for the salesman if he has to do some work with his muscles as well as with his brains. I never saw a salesman who was any the worse for having to carry a sample case a few blocks every day, and I have seen a good many who were decidedly the worse for never having to lift a finger in the way of actual muscular work in the open air.

It is, of course, often necessary to sell with the aid of the catalog, and many manufacturers publish expensive books of the sort and put them into the

hands of the trade. As a suggestion in connection with the advisability of usually having something concrete to put into the hands of the buyer, I would recommend that these expensive catalogs, whenever possible, be distributed by the salesmen. I hear groans at this suggestion, but let me tell you salesmen this: if you have a handsome catalog, a high-class book to present to your prospect when you see him, you have something to make the handle of the best and most effective kind of selling talk.

Supplies of catalogs could be expressed ahead or mailed to a salesman's different stopping points, and he has the chance to put these right into the hands of the men for whom they are made, to call attention to the expensive way in which they are prepared, and, further, to point out special features.

I believe that the salesman who undertakes the distribution of catalogs with the intention of making it a help to his sales will find it one of the best things he ever did. Of course this applies only where the catalog is really a good one.

There is more to showing goods—to opening up a line of samples—than merely taking them out of a trunk or sample case and laying them on a table. Just as the effect produced by a display of goods in a store is very largely dependent upon the way the goods are shown, so the way a man shows samples has much to do with the effect on the buyer. There is some feature about every piece that needs to be emphasized. There is some advantage that ought not to be passed. Sometimes the advantages will be obvious with the sample laid in a certain position, while they would be unnoticed otherwise. Every advantage that can be made to speak for itself will

save the salesman's emphasis, giving him a chance to bear harder on some other point.

So many manufacturers nowadays give their selling forces complete instructions about the handling and displaying of samples that it seems almost unnecessary to suggest that the selling force ought to receive these. It sometimes happens that the sales manager is himself none too competent in the matter of showing goods. Most individual salesmen have ideas of their own about the display of their line, and these are usually worth imparting to the rest of the force. This indicates that the salesmen ought to exchange ideas on showing goods, and it would pay to get them together for this express purpose.

It will usually take a salesman longer to make a town if he shows his line. He will miss his favorite train, and perhaps he will not get to the place he likes to spend Sunday. But, unpleasant as this may be, the showing of the goods is more important than adherence to a schedule that may cost the loss of a customer here and there. The man who is out to sell goods is out for no other purpose. Everything else should be made to bend to that end. If it takes longer to make the territory, and if it costs more to make it when carrying a proper sample equipment, that is no argument against it. It is worth more—a good deal more than the additional cost.

People may buy more slowly from samples, but they will buy more intelligently and more freely. A man will buy better when he is absolutely satisfied as to what the goods are than he will when there is something left to the imagination. The extra time a customer may take in buying from samples cannot be offset by hurrying him, for hurrying the exami-

nation of goods is the worst kind of salesmanship. There may be times when it is absolutely necessary to hurry the buyer, but there is never a time when it is desirable to have him feel hurried. Anything about the purchase that does not turn out right will be laid to the hasty buying.

We all have a liking for the salesman who seems to be perfectly willing to take down anything in the store, even when we say we have no present intention of buying. The salesman who appears to have plenty of time to show the goods, and an abundant inclination to do it cheerfully, and who says, "That's all right. It doesn't make a bit of difference whether you buy or not," is pretty apt to land us if we feel the least disposition to buy.

By willingness to show goods and the use of all reasonable effort to do it, I did not mean insisting on showing them when the buyer has neither the disposition nor the willingness to spare time to see them. Many a salesman has queered himself for the future as well as for the present by too much insistence. Show your line at every opportunity, and make opportunity whenever possible to do so without giving offense.

CHAPTER XI

WHERE COMPETITION IS CONCERNED

WHILE it is up to the head of the business to meet competition in the matter of prices and quality of product, terms, etc., and while the salesman is subject to and not the maker of the rules that govern the attitude of the house toward its competitors, the real relations of the house to its competitors, as considered by the customers, are governed largely by the words and acts of the salesman. The customers of the house may know there is a head behind it all who does the planning and is responsible for policies, but they have come in contact only with the salesmen who make their territory, and through these salesmen they get their impressions.

The salesman should make it his business to be informed on all matters of competition. The management should take the selling force into its confidence to a great degree, giving them information as to what competing houses are doing or planning, and how that competition is to be met.

No doubt there are times when it would not be wise to let plans for the future leak out, but oftener the salesman will appreciate any confidence placed in him, and the advance knowledge will enable him to head off some competitor's move in his territory. When the house shows enough confidence in its salesmen to tell them about future plans that concern competition, it is certainly up to the salesmen to exert every possible effort to make the carrying out of those plans a success.

It is not enough for the salesman to know all about his own lines of goods, their quality, prices, etc. He should know as much as possible about the lines carried by competing houses. He should know how his own product and that nearest like it compare, item for item.

He should learn the talking points of other lines in order that he may know which of them, if any, are really backed by practical value. Many a salesman has failed to land a good prospect simply because he had no argument ready for some competitor's claim based on a point with no value except in sales-making.

If it is the part of the sales manager to keep his selling force informed regarding anything bearing on relations with competitors, it is also the part of the salesman to inform the house of anything that comes to his knowledge that may be of use in meeting competing lines.

The work of the salesman does not stop with selling goods. Every employee of a manufacturing house is engaged to do certain specific work. This does not mean, however, that such an employee need never consider himself under obligation to do anything outside of his special duties. The man who is anxious to rise will be anxious to make himself valuable in as many ways as possible. If he is a salesman, he will not stop with selling goods, but will note conditions of trade, advances of competing houses into new territory, improvements in the service or in the product of the other fellows. While there is no need for him to send in letters explaining how his territory is so thoroughly covered by competitors that there are no orders left for him, there

is need that he keep the house well informed regarding all sorts of conditions in his territory that have any bearing on the conduct of the business.

Some salesmen are so observant that not the slightest indication of business movement escapes them. They see everything that happens and they are able to attach the proper value to it. Others apparently go about with their eyes shut to everything but order blanks and sample trunks.

The former can develop their ability to observe until it performs almost miraculous feats of detection and prophecy. The latter can learn to be observing by taking pains to analyze what is going on within their knowledge instead of maintaining an absent-minded indifference to surroundings. The more the ways in which a man makes himself of value to his employers, the more value his employers will attach to his services.

Customers often ask about the quality of other lines of goods. Whether these lines are competing lines or not, the salesman cannot afford to misstate the facts. It is not to be expected, of course, that one will encourage a belief that the other goods are better than his own. Be fair about competing products, say nothing but what is true; but it is not necessary to lean over backward. One may be straight without overdoing it.

The information desired should be given if possible, but it should be followed by carefully pointing out wherein your own products are superior. If the competing lines must be praised, it may well be with that proverbial "faint praise" which is intended to damn.

Sometimes certain unimportant advantages may be

admitted on the part of competing goods when these unimportant advantages are to be offset with really important advantages on the part of your own line. Admitting the small advantage on the part of the other fellow's goods creates a favorable impression in the mind of the hearer—a favorable impression for the man who makes the admission; while any advantage thus given to competing goods may at once be counteracted by asserting specifically greater advantages in your own product.

If a salesman talks about competitors in a bitter and prejudiced manner, and allows himself to give the impression that he feels "sore" toward them, he will gain the reputation of being unfair and unwilling to concede even the facts about others.

The buyer expects the salesman to be enthusiastic about his own goods. He expects him to swear by his own house, but he does not like to hear him swear *at* the other fellow's house. We all have respect for a fair-minded man and little use for the biased little chap who cannot admit anything good in the other fellow. When a salesman comes around who is forever condemning his competitors, knocking either methods, goods or salesmen opposed to him, we feel like turning him down and giving the other man a chance.

In the matter of price-cutting some houses are always a thorn in the flesh of their competitors. They are always making a special price, or making what looks like a special price, though it may not be to the advantage of the buyer. These people demoralize trade conditions for their own temporary advantage. Often, I believe, this kind of work is done by individual salesmen without the knowl-

edge of their employers, perhaps even contrary to orders.

When such instances are brought up by a customer who quotes some special concession offered him, the salesman should inquire carefully into all the details of the proposition. Often there is some little kink in the offer that the buyer has not noticed, and he may thank you for bringing it to his attention. In any event a special concession based on some hidden disadvantage of price or terms will prove a boomerang to the man who gave it and lose him the trade of the customer.

It pays the salesman to get as close to his customers as he can, to do all in his power to win their confidence, so they will not be unwilling to inform him of offers and methods of competitors.

Of course there are now and then customers who will quote to you falsely in the hope of gaining some advantage. They may have even induced one of your competitors to give them a lower price by falsely representing that you have offered them the same. Such customers are always found out in the long run. To foil these tricks it pays to be on friendly terms with competing salesmen and to discuss buyers' characteristics with a view to giving the tricksters the reputation they deserve.

If a buyer has tricked you by some form of misrepresentation, you will be doing a competing salesman a kindness to tell him about it; but you will be doing yourself a kindness too, because your competitor will doubtless reciprocate with similar information about some other buyer. Further, if you spread the reputation of the dishonest buyer, if he again misquotes you in seeking to secure better terms

from some other house he will be distrusted, and will fail to secure terms that might further demoralize the market.

It is not unnatural for a salesman, on finding a buyer so deeply attached to another house that he will not even listen to another salesman's selling talk, to feel that it is time wasted to continue his calls. Nothing could be further from the truth. The buyer who is hard to change is well worth cultivating. Some day something is going to happen to make it necessary for him to change. The house he likes may go out of business. The salesman representing that house may be the cause of his allegiance, or that salesman may die or change to another territory. There are many possible causes of change, and when the time does come the salesman who has kept calling and developing a personal acquaintance is the one most likely to get the business.

No personal advantage is to be gained by picking flaws in others. The man who wants to be a better salesman than his competitors must spend his spare time in looking over his own equipment, and in seeing how he can better it, rather than in telling where somebody else's equipment falls below his own.

The time when a salesman thinks it unnecessary to try hard is just the time when lack of effort may give a competitor just the chance he has been looking for all the time. The pitcher who thinks he can let down for a minute and take it easy may find that the opposing team has been watching for that minute in order to break through, and his moment of relaxation may develop into a bunch of rapidly succeeding hits that will lose him the game before he can gather himself together again.

No man can be perfect, and no salesman can avoid the possibility of letting down once in a while, because no human being can keep his guard up every minute of his working life. But unless we aim at perfection we will never approach it, and the harder we try the nearer we will come to succeeding.

CHAPTER XII

SELLING BETTER GOODS

EVERY salesman has a natural preference for selling to the best class of trade. We like to sell to the men who use the highest grade of goods and who buy in large quantities. We like to call on the men of the concerns with plenty of money back of them, because we reason that the more money a firm has the more of it we can get. As a matter of fact, however, the concerns with the most money with which to buy are sometimes the hardest to sell.

It ought to be a cardinal principle with every salesman that each customer should be sold the highest quality of goods he will buy. There is every advantage in selling high-grade goods.

The advantage in selling better goods begins right with the salesman himself. He feels a greater pride in his line, a greater loyalty to the house, and a greater pleasure in the actual selling. Any man can do better work at selling goods he likes than goods in which he has no confidence. Just as the carpenter likes best to work with good tools on a high-priced job, just as the jeweler enjoys working on a high-class watch better than tinkering at the dollar kind, so you get more satisfaction out of talking good goods.

The customer who is naturally inclined to buy the best goods is usually a better man with whom to do business. He is better informed on workmanship, style, finish, durability, actual value on all points,

than the fellow who always gets along with the cheapest he can buy.

And the man who may naturally incline toward the cheaper grades of stock can be made a better man to do business with by selling him better goods. A man's business ideas advance as the quality of his equipment advances. The man who is induced to buy a better or the best grade of stock recognizes the good points after he has tried them out, and the next time it is easier to sell to him. More than that, the man who buys high-grade goods in one line immediately becomes an easier man to sell the high-grade goods in some other line.

The man who buys and uses high-grade stock admits certain standards of which the cheap buyer knows nothing. The buyer of cheap goods is always finding fault with them. They do not give satisfaction. He expects almost as much of his cheap goods as the buyer of better stock expects of his purchases. Cheap buyers are dissatisfied buyers, and that makes it harder to sell them a second time.

The buyer thinks of the price while he is buying, but he thinks of the quality while he is using.

The man who buys quality goods will prove to be a satisfied customer, a good advertisement for your house, and an easy repeat when he needs more.

It is better policy to sell the best goods possible, because it means bigger sales today and more sales and easier ones tomorrow.

Of course this is all aside from the fact that the better goods pay a better profit. It is always on the cheap grades of stock that there is the most competition. The cut-rate dealers, the men who seem to be out to get rid of the goods whether they make

money or not, always work on the low-priced lines. To devote most of your time and salesmanship to the small-profit lines is to push along the direction of the least possible profit.

While it is often easier to make sales of the cheap lines, it is usually the cheap men who make the bulk of those sales, because any kind of a salesman can quote a price and the price argument is the only argument on bargain stock. No brains and no salesmanship are needed to offer a man goods at a lower figure than he has been paying, though an occasional, not to say frequent, falsehood is necessary to get him to buy. The truth will never get an order for cheap goods from a man who is in the habit of buying the best. Nothing but the truth will ever get an order for good stock from a man who is in the habit of buying cheap stuff.

The man who habitually buys cheap stock is not likely of his own initiative to raise the quality of his purchases. But if the salesman admits that he must sell merely what his customers ask for, that salesmanship consists in simply writing down an order, then salesmanship is a matter of chirography, not persuasion.

The salesman who takes matters into his own hands and decides that he can and will sell what he wants to sell, what it will pay him to sell, what it will pay the buyer best to buy, holds in his own hands the making of his business destiny.

There are some buyers who must buy cheap stock because they never get enough money ahead to buy any other kind. Such men cannot easily be cured of that. It is largely a habit due to shiftlessness and to lack of foresight. Many cheap buyers, however,

are such from ignorance of actual using conditions, and they can be educated out of the cheap buying habit.

When a man who has been in the habit of buying trash does buy something with quality and durability to it, he is the proudest possessor of anyone you ever saw. He takes care of the article as no other owner will. He sees that it has such care as will make it prove even more satisfactory than the salesman claimed. He talks about it to friends and acquaintances and thus gives it no end of free advertising.

When a man has paid more than he intended, or more than he thought he really ought to pay in order to get a better quality article, unless he is the rare exception, he will note carefully how much more service the better article gives. If it proves profitable he will know it.

But it does take salesmanship of the highest order to sell a man the best, particularly to sell it so it will give satisfaction. Almost any salesman who has self-confidence can sell larger quantities of stock, but it takes genuine salesmanship to get a buyer to a point where he will pay fifty or a hundred per cent more for his purchase and then take the line and give it a fair show.

In order to sell the better goods, the salesman must know all about his goods. He must know how and where they are made, and he should know all about the details of quality and workmanship. Just as soon as you begin to urge a man to buy a higher-priced article he begins to ask questions. He wants a whole lot of detailed and specific information, and he may surprise you with his knowledge of the things he is talking of buying.

When a buyer expects to pay ten dollars, he will not pay twelve fifty without knowing exactly why it will pay. There must be a good and sufficient explanation of why the extra quality is an advantage, why it is cheaper in the end, why it costs more in the first place.

If the customer finds he knows more about the goods than the salesman, or if he asks questions the salesman is unable to answer satisfactorily, there is little chance of his purchasing anything he does not absolutely need and want.

The salesman who is determined to boost his sales by selling better goods must study continually the lines he is handling. To know all about a line when you start in to sell it is almost impossible, and even if it were not, it would not argue that you would be well informed about it a year later. Conditions change so rapidly in the manufacture of many things that it requires more than a mere selling of the goods or even of handling them to keep abreast of the changes. The salesman must keep up a regular study of all available information on everything he sells.

Of course it may occasionally operate in the wrong way to elevate a customer's ideas about the goods. It is possible to give him the idea that if it is necessary to pay more to get a satisfactory quality he may better wait until he can afford to pay that better price and go without in the meantime. If it is better for the customer to wait and buy better stock, it is better for the house that sells him to let him wait—always supposing some other house does not get the sale in the meanwhile.

It is not good business to elevate a man's ideas above the level of his bank account, and it is here

that the salesman's judgment must come in. He must know something about what the customer can afford to buy before he starts in to sell him.

It is sometimes possible to frighten a customer out by going at it wrong end first to make the sale of good goods. When a man is contemplating adding certain equipment, for example, and considering what it may cost, he may be discouraged unnecessarily and decide not to buy at all, by reason of the salesman taking too high a quality stand at the outset instead of beginning on a moderate-priced equipment and working up.

Start in just as near the man's mental and financial level as you can, and then work up as far as it seems wise to go. It is a waste of time and of the customer's patience to start too high or too low.

With many customers the salesman is at a disadvantage if he carries only an extremely high-priced line. I mean he is at a disadvantage even with the people who might be interested by salesmanship in buying that line. The prospect realizes at the outset that the salesman has but one grade and that naturally he will not admit that any cheaper line is in the same class. If that same salesman has also a cheaper line so that he can say, "Oh, if you want the lower-grade stock, we can give it to you, though we don't believe it will give you satisfaction," this gives him a much better position with his customer and his arguments for the high-grade goods go farther.

If a prospective buyer knows the salesman has both low-priced and high-priced goods, and if the salesman can convince him the house would make more profit just selling the cheaper lines, that buyer is certain to listen with interest and belief to what

the salesman has to say about the advantages of the quality stock.

It is a grave mistake to let a customer feel ashamed at having thought of buying the cheapest. Some salesmen I have known take no pains to conceal their scorn for the man who buys low-priced goods. This kind of customer can never be converted to a quality man by acting as if he were a piker. Tact must be used rather than bluntness.

There is no reason why it should not be easier to talk high-quality goods and to sell them than to sell the cheap grades. All the desires of the buyer and the seller are for the good goods. The cheap article has nothing to recommend it but its price. We all know the customer would prefer the better quality if he could pay the price easily. Find out how much a customer can afford to pay and then bear on hard on the quality at that limit.

Quality goods should not be scaled down in price to compete with cheap ones. Keep a profit on the good goods that will keep up the interest in selling them, and that will make it possible to cover the territory well. Then, instead of seeing only the men who are ready today to buy the highest-priced lines, see also the men who are perhaps too small today, but who tomorrow may be a little bigger and the next day big enough to buy anything.

Not only keep watch of the little fellows who are growing, but go out of your way to show them how they can grow faster, and they will develop into the best kind of prospects and the most loyal, faithful and appreciative customers.

CHAPTER XIII

PUTTING ON THE FINISHING TOUCHES

IT IS one thing to find a prospect and get a sale started, and often it is quite another to close it up.

You find a promising prospective purchaser who talks as if he wanted to buy. He is willing to look at samples and to discuss quality and prices, and he likes your proposition. There is no trouble with him until after the order is down in black and white, perhaps, and then he hesitates and shies at putting his name on the dotted line.

A sale is not a sale until the last detail is completed. The finishing touches are what transform a prospective buyer into an actual buyer. The difficulty is not in finding people who will talk as if they wanted to buy, but in getting their signatures on the orders.

Tact is an important quality in getting a sale completed, in inducing the buyer to say he will take the goods and in getting him to sign the order. There are, however, many men who need a show of firmness as well as of tact before they will "sign here."

There should be no hesitation on the part of the salesman about getting his sale closed up in good legal form, with a signature to make it binding. Some buyers hate to put their name on any order. Fortunately such men are becoming less in number. If a man who has ordered goods is not willing to sign an order which is made out according to his own instructions, it may be better to let him go at the last minute than to ship without guaranty of acceptance.

One who is hesitant about signing an order is likely to be hesitant about accepting the goods. Either he is ignorant of the customary methods of doing business or he is trying to leave himself a hole to crawl out of.

A man who will order goods without the expectation of accepting them is not a man with whom you want to do business.

There is a great difference in order forms, and a buyer who has no objection to signing an ordinary order may balk at some complicated clause, the meaning of which seems to him not quite clear, or which may be susceptible of misconstruction. If the order blanks of your house are not simple and easily understood, see what can be done to make them so. And once a good form is adopted, keep it the same, not only in actual wording, but also in general appearance. A buyer who has been signing your order blanks for a long time and who has grown so accustomed to them that he does it without hesitation, may be led to hesitate by having a blank of different color of stock or typographical appearance offered him. Any obvious alteration will cause buyers to stop and investigate to see whether there is any change in the conditions. That moment of hesitancy in some cases will be the moment in which the buyer will change his mind. This is getting it down pretty fine, perhaps, but little things often influence us in important decisions.

There should be no hemming and hawing on the part of the salesman when it comes to closing up orders. There should be nothing left to the customer's imagination, and there should be no promises that are not incorporated in the order. The sales-

man who promises his customer things the actual order does not provide for, favors or privileges that in all probability will never be extended, is planning to lose the trade of the man he thus leads into buying. Wise buyers no longer expect anything not incorporated in the order, but not all buyers are or ever will be wise.

It is particularly important that in the case of purchases for future delivery there shall be a perfect understanding of prices and terms, and that there be no chance for countermanding at such a time as will put the seller in an inconvenient position. In this day of sales made for delivery of goods many months in advance no chances should be taken. It is to the advantage of both the buyer and seller to have things absolutely understood, and it should be the final touch of the sale to see that the buyer does understand.

It is not excessive talking that closes up sales. Few goods are sold by sheer weight of talk. The salesman who makes the most sales is he who not only knows when to speak, but also when to keep still and what not to say. He knows when to give the buyer a chance to take and the arguments a chance to sink in.

The old-fashioned, talk-his-arm-off style of salesmanship has gone entirely out of fashion. You can no longer back a buyer up into a corner and force him into taking your goods. To try to do this would immediately stamp you as a cheap, clap-trap salesman, and it would be suspected that you represented a cheap house and cheap goods. You can compel a man by sheer weight of words to nod his head to certain points you may make, but a man will nod

his head to many things when he will not touch a pen to sign his name to them.

Advertising and other modern influences have educated the buying public to think, and you do not want to sell to a buyer who will buy without thinking, because he probably represents a house that will buy without being any too anxious to settle. No good buyer buys off-hand—on the spur of the moment.

Much of the success in salesmanship depends upon the way the finishing touch is handled. It is the finishing touch that counts, because it is the last word that secures the signature.

Say the right things and do the right things, too, in closing up the fruitless visit just as in closing up the sale. The fruitless call should not be regarded as effort wasted. It should be considered as one of the steps to a future sale, and care used to make it count in that way if it can be made to count in no other way.

To go away leaving unpleasant feeling is unfortunate. To leave the impression that you are offended at the buyer for not buying is to make him think you do not believe he understands his business. To feel disgruntled and to show it is fatal to your chances the next time.

If you fail after going as far as you can toward making a sale, the thing to do is to back out gracefully. Leave behind some word or suggestion that may be of help to the buyer, thus placing him under obligation rather than leaving yourself indebted to him for the chance to show your goods and present your arguments.

You can always get a hearing another time with a man you have treated well and have not bored when

he did not care to purchase. You can expect to be received courteously and given a chance time and again as long as you do not abuse the privilege accorded you, and as long as you continue to leave a good impression by putting the right finishing touches on your call. It is as important to leave a good impression as it is to get an order signed.

It is easily possible to do or say something, even after making a sale, that will leave a bad impression. Care should be taken, after securing an order, to leave as soon as possible without appearing to hurry, and a courteous parting should be carefully expressed. To hang around the buyer after he has bought is to give him a chance to change his mind.

The courtesy that goes with good salesmanship should not stop when the sale is made. There should be a quick and brief show of appreciation, and if the buyer has something to say you should listen to it. But when the buyer is through talking and the order is signed your business there is ended. Even when the buyer does not order, when he has nothing more to say and obviously does not care to listen longer, your business with him for that trip is ended. A courteous farewell will be the more likely to secure for you a courteous greeting when you come again.

If you fail to make a sale this trip your last thought and the finishing touch should be calculated to leave the door open for the time when you are to come again.

CHAPTER XIV

PUTTING PUNCH INTO SALESMANSHIP

WE HAVE all been visited by salesmen who could have put their sale across if they had not been entirely lacking in force—in the ability to put a punch into their selling talk.

These fellows had a good line of selling arguments. They gave us abundant good reasons for buying. The reasons were logical enough. The goods were all right, but somehow they were not presented in a compelling fashion. They did not make us feel that we just *had* to buy; so we turned them down.

What is there about this idea of a punch that makes it seem to effect the difference between selling methods that *almost* succeed and selling methods that really succeed?

Punch makes a listener sit up and take notice. One can hear with indifference a salesman who lacks punch, but the man who puts all his energy and enthusiasm into the telling cannot be easily passed by.

Energy is one of the most essential qualities in developing punch. With all the good intentions in the world, if a man lacks energy he cannot develop punch. What would a prize-fighter's punch amount to if it did not have the accumulated energy of months of training behind it? Punch of the physical sort is energy translated into physical action. Punch of the mental sort is energy translated into mental activity.

The foundation of punch, then, is vital energy—

the force that enables us to put our best effort into our selling work and to keep up this best through the whole work.

The development of successful salesmanship is not dependent upon a spurt or two. Successful selling is not a sprint; it is a long-distance race, and it takes a good physique as well as ambition to succeed. A salesman may now and then land a sale by the sprint method, but in order to make a real success he must put energy into every selling effort.

It takes more vitality to keep up speed through the whole working day, but every time one lets down it is harder to come back. The tennis player knows that if he takes it easy and loafs a set after playing at top speed he will find it uphill work to get back on the third set to anything like his best form, though he might have maintained it for many sets if he had not slowed down at all. It is easier to keep up a good momentum than to alternate slowing down and speeding up.

Do your slowing down after the day's work is over. Take your rest after work instead of between calls. Most of us know the feeling of listlessness after a nap at an unaccustomed hour. We get the same effect in a less degree when we let down for a few minutes or half an hour between calls. Our energy is largely used up in trying to come back rather than in imparting force and vitality to our sales talks.

We all feel a little envy for the man of abounding vitality, unless we possess it ourselves. He is full of life and spirit; his walk is elastic; his "Good morning" carries with it the impression that it *is* a good morning and that it is good to be alive. He inter-

ests us in spite of the fact that we do not feel that we want to be interested. We cannot turn down off-hand his type of salesman. He compels our attention by his physical presence.

This is putting an actual physical punch into salesmanship and doing it by means of physical well-being. It does not even require a high degree of intelligence to do this. All that is necessary is sense enough to see the truth and to go ahead and develop a sound, elastic body.

Health is not all of salesmanship, and neither is punch all of it, but we certainly have to admit that a sound body is the foundation of it all. You cannot deliver a mental or a physical punch without being able to put something in the way of force behind it.

Of course one may overdo this physical effect. It will not help salesmanship to bound into the buyer's presence like an athletic freshman, with one's thought all for physical exuberance and none for mental grasp of the situation and its finer opportunities.

Any kind of force is a detriment when not controlled. Punching at the empty atmosphere is a waste of time and energy. Care must be taken to determine how one's force should be used, where and when the punch should be delivered.

In selling some customers it may be found wise to repress some of the appearance of physical force. There are all kinds of folks among buyers. One man may take more kindly to the type of salesman who, though on his tiptoes, gives evidence of it only in intensity and in forceful presentation of his talk. Now and then we encounter a man who really seems offended at surplus vitality in somebody else. We have to learn how to approach these nervous, dys-

peptic chaps who have a grouch that good cheer and a fine, sunshiny morning cannot dispel.

The trained orator knows that he cannot hold his audience up to a high pitch all the time. There must be points when the listeners can rest, when a story or a quiet period of talk forms a relief from the demand for keen attention.

If you have but a few minutes with a buyer—and many times this is the case—you will find it pays to gather up your punchful points and thrust them concisely at that man one by one, thus making your call stand out as a high spot in his business day. You have that chance to make *your* call the one most conspicuous. You grasp and grip the hearer's attention at the first, you hold it by punch after punch, and, sale or no sale, you pass on, leaving him impressed with what you have said and the way you have said it.

If you have to spend considerable time with your prospect, then deliver your occasional punches as the high spots of your call. When you have gone these particular spots will be remembered.

You cannot handle this salesmanship punch idea on the same basis as the prizefighter handles his punching program. His aim is to beat down his opposition by wearing it out and finally to give it a knockout blow. Your aim is not to beat down opposition by main force, but to convince it, and the value of the punch lies not in the fact that it is a punch, but in the fact that what you have to offer is the better for being delivered with a punch.

Noise is not punch. We are all familiar with the salesman who seems to have the idea that the louder he talks the more impressive he becomes. Noise may represent a kind of force, but it is not the kind

that will influence the buyer. It is more likely the kind that will get you quickly thrust out by some of the methods known to buyers whose time is well filled.

Gesticulation is not punch. Standing up in front of a man and waving your arms as you talk does not strengthen the presentation of your arguments. Appropriate gestures now and then, of the kind natural to you, will probably help enforce your points and give emphasis to what you have to say. But don't wave anything! One must not stand like a tailor's dummy while speaking, but the other extreme is no more desirable or effective.

There is no punch worthy of the name behind boastfulness and bragging. Buyers are paid to be coldly calculating, and they take any form of bluff for just about what it is worth. If you are wise in salesmanship, you will not try boasting or bragging or bluffing. You certainly know too much to drop into the class of salesmen who seem to think it is a help to sales to show their order book and to explain what so-and-so has ordered. There may be small business men who are influenced by the order-book method, but there is absolutely no punch to that sort of thing.

By taking thought we can put punch into our salesmanship, even though we have to begin farther back and develop the ingredients we need for the purpose. The salesman without a punch is certainly handicapped and will have hard work to hold his own in this day of live wires.

Study your next selling talk and your method of presenting your arguments. Analyze it and see whether you can honestly say you think you put behind it all the force you could or should.

CHAPTER XV

HONESTY IN SELLING

HONESTY pays. Of course that is a rather sordid way of looking at honesty, but after all, it does pay, and there is no harm in accepting the profits that go with it, any more than there is discredit in a physician making money in the service of humanity.

But deliver me from the man who is honest just *because* it pays. Next to a man who is honest because he is in jail and must be so, I suspect the chap who is honest simply because it pays.

If you come from a small town, you remember some business man back home whose name was synonymous with honesty, whose word was called as good as his bond. You know how you and everybody else respected that man, and you know, too, that people liked to do business with him. They patronized him regularly. His store had more steady, regular customers than the stores of the fellows who put up a flashier appearance but who did things occasionally that would not quite bear the spotlight.

Honesty has the same value in the traveling salesman that it has in the stay-at-home merchant. In fact, I think it has a higher value. When a buyer finds he can trust the salesman, that everything he says is true, it is going to be easier for that salesman to get a hearing and easier for him to sell goods. He can always introduce a new line with less trouble than the fellow who is now and then caught in exaggerations and even in falsehoods.

We don't like to do business with a man whose

goods we have to weigh or count or test when we get them. We want to be able to feel that our source of supplies is reliable. The buyer likes to know that when his purchase arrives he can depend upon its being free from flaws and imperfections.

It is obsolete to be dishonest in the selling of any kind of goods. Dishonest business men have drifted away from the centers of trade, and they can almost be said, as a class, to be extinct. Dishonest business methods have gone the way of the hoopskirt, the high-wheeled bicycle and the congress shoe.

You, the salesman, represent to a large degree the honesty of the house behind you. You are the real point of contact between your customers and your employers. Whether or not you truly represent in your own characteristics the principles of your house, you will be considered as representing them. The house cannot very well offset the impressions conveyed by the methods and words of its salesmen on the road.

When you make a misstatement regarding the products you sell, the result is practically the same as if the house had issued that statement. The house suffers by it. You may be able to make a larger sale today by stretching the truth, but as a result you may be unable to make any sale at all tomorrow.

If you cannot maintain the selling speed you have set out to maintain without exaggerating and falsifying, then let the speed down to where it depends upon a more reliable force.

Honesty is the foundation of business. When you slip a dishonest stone into the foundation you as a salesman are helping to build for the house, you put in there a stone that is going to crumble, and if

it is put into an important position it may cause disaster. The old if-you-can't-be-honest-be-as-honest-as-you-can basis of selling has become obsolete. Honesty has become an exact proposition, and every successful salesman has to be perfectly honest if he is to have the reputation of being honest at all.

A young man went to work for an employer who told him he would have to tell some white lies in order to sell goods. The young man's conscience would not permit even white lies and he gave up the position and went elsewhere. He succeeded in business and came back to the town years later, to find his former boss, at 65 years of age, shoveling shavings into a furnace for eight dollars a week. Dishonest business methods are the surest road I know to a hard-working, horny-handed old age.

The appearance of truth superimposed upon falsehood causes a greater calamity when the facts come to light than a perfectly bald falsehood at the outset would have caused. If you are going to lie, lie at the outset and make it a good one. That will place you where people will know what to expect. It is not the lie we detect that makes us trouble so much as the deception that we do not notice at first.

I have heard some salesmen say in excusing questionable selling methods, "All the rest do it, and I must do it or quit." Then quit! There are times when it is to a man's credit that he quits. When the time comes that you think it is necessary to be a crooked salesman, you have come to the parting of the ways, and if the honesty road seems to lead to failure, you may be sure the dishonesty road goes to the same place, but at a steeper grade and with no return tickets.

Truth crushed to earth, Bryant said, will rise again. I am not going to deny that, but if you crush truth to the earth you may be sure it will not rise again without showing the effects of the crushing. If you crush truth in your selling talks it will take a long time for it to come back to where it will look to buyers like the real, genuine, honest-to-God truth. It may be the truth; you may know it for the truth, but you will have hard work convincing others of it.

Another thing about dishonesty in selling is that it not only interferes with your own subsequent success, but it interferes with the success of other salesmen. There are some men who develop a distrust of all salesmen because of the dishonesty of one with whom they have come in contact. It seems to be human nature to distrust everybody after one man has proved a fraud.

And then, too, if you are dishonest, you are going to get a bad reputation for your house, a reputation that will be a serious handicap to the man who succeeds you in your territory, even though he is a perfectly reliable man.

You may think you have a right to be dishonest yourself because you assume the responsibility for your own dishonesty. You are wrong. You cannot be dishonest without doing others an injury. If you will not be honest because you want to be, because you are that kind of a man, then at least you must be honest because you have no right to harm others.

It is necessary to draw a straight line between honesty and dishonesty. There is no such thing as semi-honesty. There are no shadings in this matter of the truth. A man is either honest or he is dishonest. His word about what he is selling is either the truth

or it is a lie. It may seem that there is a chance to exaggerate a little without lying, but when you overrate the quality of your goods, or overstate the results they will produce, you tell what is not true.

Your reputation with your customers is going to be no stronger than the weakest statement you make about your goods, and you will be considered no more honest than your dishonest or exaggerated statements. And the worst of it is, your house is going to be judged by your methods.

Of course there are salesmen representing lines that are hard to sell without exaggerating their value. If you are so unfortunate as to be in that position, instead of spoiling your opportunity to develop successful trade in your territory, stick to the truth and make your plans to get connected with a line that can be sold on its merits.

Just because you are out for a house whose product is not quite up to that of its competitors, don't ruin your reputation by claiming more for the line than the facts warrant.

You cannot hold trade on an exaggerating basis and there is no money to be made in selling people just once by hook or crook. The hook-or-crook method of selling is sure to end in the salesman getting the hook and being branded a crook.

You know how you feel when a salesman in a competing line goes through your territory lying right and left about his goods and about your line. If you are honest, you just long to get at that salesman with your bare hands. He is spoiling the territory for you and in the end for himself.

If you allow yourself to drift away from the facts in your selling talk, you will have other salesmen

feeling that way about you. Everything connected with the satisfactory development of your business success hinges upon honesty. Recognize this important truth and act accordingly.

STICK TO FACTS!

When you start out with your line,
Stick to facts!
Lies won't make your business fine.
Stick to facts!
No matter what you have to sell,
The truth is good enough to tell.
Boost your goods and boost them well,
But stick to facts!

When tempted to exaggerate,
Stick to facts!
Tell the truth; don't over-state.
Stick to facts!
If the truth is not enough,
Something's wrong about your stuff.
Anyway don't try to bluff.
Stick to facts!

Salesmen, makers, middlemen,
Stick to facts!
When it's nine, don't call it ten;
Stick to facts!
Though others make their figures lie,
Boasting of their values high,
Causing trade to pass you by,
You stick to facts!

CHAPTER XVI

THE MORNING AFTER

THERE is nothing new about the idea that is prevalent among so many salesmen and other employees that their time is their own outside of working hours and that they are at liberty to do with it as they see fit, even to the extent of carousing or "celebrating" or otherwise unfitting themselves for the next day's business.

There are even here and there employers who seem to think they themselves can let down the moral bars after business hours and do as they please without regard to effects.

I have no doubt that it is just the feeling that a man has a right to choose his own occupations out of working hours that causes a good many men to abuse that right. Just because the boss has intimated that we ought not to dissipate at night, we are going to show him that our time is our own and that we will dissipate if we want to. We will even go out of our way to do this, just because of that chip on our shoulder.

Well, no doubt a salesman does have the technical right to do as he pleases with his own time—provided what he does with it does not interfere with his doing his work well the next day.

If a man can sell as many goods, look as bright, be as cheerful, give as efficient service the morning after a night of dissipation, probably I have no legal right as an employer to discipline him. In other words, I ought to be able to stand it if he can.

If there is nothing in a salesman's dissipating to affect in any way his salesmanship or the prestige of the house, then his employer need not feel aggrieved, and from a strictly business point of view perhaps he need not interfere.

But there is a big "if" standing in the way of safe dissipation. Unfortunately for the love of sporting life, no man can follow it up at night and be as valuable to his employer or to himself next day. He is physically less efficient. He is mentally less alert. He is morally lower in standard. He has reduced the prestige of his employer's business in the eyes of everyone who has recognized him as connected with it while knowing of his dissipation.

A salesman of good physique may think he is as good a man the morning after, and he may be good enough at that to be better than some of his fellow workers, but as for his being as good as he would have been without the dissipation, there is no such thing on the cards.

No man can conceal completely his inclination to undesirable amusements. He may not get caught at it for a long time, and yet his acquaintances will know it. They may not know it well enough to say so, but they will be sure of it in their own minds, and that condition will have its influence on the salesman's reputation.

There are customers who do not care what kind of a man comes to sell to them as long as his goods and his prices are right. But even these customers will notice right away if the salesman lacks the qualifications every high-class man respects, and in the end they will come to doubt his honesty and question his

statements about his line. That means they will doubt the goods.

The time is past when a man is considered to have earned a day's pay just because he has spent a day on the job. We gauge a salesman's value to the house by the results of his work rather than merely by the amount of time he has spent on it. When a salesman does nothing more than make his territory and take what orders are easily gathered in, he does not earn his salary, and he does not get it indefinitely.

Somebody is going to set a high mark for selling for your house. It may be a man who has the ability to sell more goods than any of the rest. It may be a man with a better territory. No matter who or what he is, every other salesman is going to be contrasted with the high man, and while some allowances will be made for adverse conditions of one kind or another, nevertheless the lower men are going to be criticised for their lower standing.

If you are among the low men because you have not had experience, you can gradually overcome that handicap. You are getting more experience all the time and you ought to profit by it.

If you are a low man because you have a poor territory, there is nothing to prevent you from making more of that territory than any other has ever succeeded in doing for your house, and that will stamp you as a high man even though you have a low mark in gross sales.

If you are a low man simply because you have not done your best and because you have handicapped your ability and dwarfed your ambition by dissipation, you have no one to blame but yourself and you will get lower and lower until you disappear from

view, unless you change your methods and make up your mind that what you do outside of working hours does have something to do with the success of your work.

Are you the weakest salesman working for your house? Are you the one man whose actions on the road are not always a credit to the house? If you are, you are throwing away your future and discrediting your past. The men who are below you on the list of salesmen, even the green hands who sell just about enough to earn their salaries—these men are going to come up and pass you by if you are the kind of man who believes in having a good time tonight and letting tomorrow look out for itself.

Some men think they may be careless about their personal lives as long as they are honest in their business lives. The great god Business stands paramount in the minds of many men, and they appear not to care what happens as long as they do a good business.

There are two reasons why one should look beyond the mere pleasure of the good time when off duty. One of these is that too much good time spells too little business, and the other is that, no matter what we think, we cannot get drunk at night and do as good work the next day. Business is sure to be affected by booze and dissipation.

Benjamin Franklin said, "Keep your mouth wet and your feet dry," but he did not mean to commend booze, because anyone who knows anything about it will admit that wetting your mouth with booze leaves it dryer than ever. And anyway, Franklin also said, "He who drinks fast pays slow." Poor Richard knew what he was talking about.

It is not my intention to preach a sermon here. I

am only stating facts. When a great railroad issues orders that its employees shall not enter a saloon even when off duty, it stamps liquor as an enemy to good railroading. Incidentally it shows that corporations do reach out and govern their employees outside of working hours. It is not altruism that has caused such steps to be taken. The prime motive was results—dollars and cents results—either directly or indirectly.

I want to hire a salesman. Am I going to pick out the fellow I saw going home one night with his jacket full? Perhaps he may be a fine fellow and know his trade from A to Z. Nevertheless he is not the man for me. He had been drunk within my knowledge, and what is to prevent him from being drunk again, perhaps at a time which might cost me an important order?

My salesmen are my representatives all the time they are on the road. As soon as they leave the plant on a business trip they are regarded as my men wherever they go. Did you ever find that you were regarded as Jones & Atwater's salesman through the day and as private Bill Higgins when you hung around the hotel at night? Not so you would notice it. You are Jones & Atwater's man all the time. The cronies who call you "Bill" and invite you to come in and get soused at the bar with them, know whom you represent, and when they are visiting with you over the bar or on the road they talk more or less about business. You are the representative of your house all the time you are out. You cannot get away from it. The salesman who thinks he is going to be able to put over the booze-at-night-and-business-in-the-daytime program does not realize what

life offers him in the way of opportunities. He is thinking more about having fun without letting work interfere too much with it, than about doing his work the best he can and taking what fun of the right sort happens along.

We never know when we are under the eyes of someone who could give us a boost up the business ladder. There is no safe place for dissipation if you expect not to be found out. You might order a quart of whisky sent up to your room and stay there and get drunk all by yourself and not go out until you sobered up, but even this would not be kept as quiet as you think.

I don't care what your pet vice may be or how carefully you have been concealing it, in spite of your cautions it is known by a whole lot of people you would blush to face if you realized they knew it. And it is suspected by as many more.

Talk to some man who has given up his sporting proclivities, who perhaps thought he was having a great time while he kept at it. Let me know if you find such a man who can honestly say he did not hamper his advance and interfere with his success in life by his carelessness. Don't think that because you know of someone else who has given up dissipation you are going to be able to give it up when you get good and ready. It is one thing to be willing to give up dissipation and it is another to be able to do it.

There may be men who have made good on the road in spite of drink. I never knew one who had made good on account of it. I have known men who did not get ahead an inch until they gave it up.

Some clever chap wrote the post card motto, "If drink interferes with business, give up business."

Make up your mind that you will have to give up one or the other or business will give you up and booze will throw you down.

If you have gone into business to have a good time, you will find you have made a mistake. The kind of good times you are looking for are on another road. Of course business has its good times for the man who puts business first. When a man likes business and makes it his first interest, he will get more good times out of doing it than his friend will get out of dissipation. And the morning after will look good to him instead of dark and gloomy.

The chap who determines to have a good time as he goes along will not go so very far, though he may go pretty fast. The man whose highest ambition is for fun is to be pitied. Life is going to prove to be pretty much an empty husk for him.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, but there are plenty of kinds of pleasure that produce lasting happiness instead of a momentary excitement and a dark brown taste for hours afterward.

CHAPTER XVII

"SELLING" VS. "INTRODUCING"

BUSINESS lives by its actual sales, not by its near-sales. It is a fine thing for a salesman to be able to come in and report that there is a great interest manifested all along the line in the new specialty he has been introducing. It is a nice thing to be able to write in that this or that big user of certain equipment looks with great favor on the device the salesman tells him will save him ten per cent on costs.

It is encouraging to the house, no doubt, to know that there are excellent prospects of developing a big business on the item in the near future. But interest and prospects will not pay salesmen's salaries and expenses. Possibilities must turn to certainties before anything worth while happens.

It is too often the case that if a salesman is given a new article when he starts out, if he is instructed on the selling points of something the house is just beginning to market, he gets the idea that he is expected only to "introduce" that article on the first trip; that it is not expected that he will make many sales until he has had a chance to talk it up several times with his prospects.

Sometimes he is justified in deducing this from what the sales manager tells him. In other words, the salesman is not always entirely to blame. He is not given to understand that he is expected to make sales right off the reel without waiting until he has gone through an introducing process.

Of course a buyer will often decline to take up a

new proposition until he has had time to think it over. There are some men whose mental processes are so slow that it is out of the question to sell them anything radically new the first time. They do not grasp its advantages on merely hearing them. They have to take time to let the ideas sink in. But if a salesman were to base all his plans and his efforts on the kind of customer who absolutely cannot be sold the first time, there would be mighty few sales made the second or third or any other time.

It takes assurance to make sales, and if the salesman is sure he is not going to sell he will find his assurance justified, for he will not close up anything when he is in that frame of mind.

The term "introducing" should not be allowed to stand in the mind of the salesman for a special form of work foreign to selling. If it is desired merely to make the possible buyer acquainted with an article, there are less expensive ways of effecting the introduction than by a man who is paid a high salary for his selling ability.

"Introducing" should be synonymous with "selling." It should be different from the ordinary selling only in that it means the selling of some hitherto unknown item of stock—something which is less easy to sell because its value is not an acknowledged fact with the buyer; something more easily sold because it is not as hard to develop enthusiasm for a new article of obvious value as for an old number.

To counteract the disadvantages of the newness of a specialty the salesman must be perfectly informed in advance of its merits and warned of the possible weak spots in its claims. He must know the goods clear down to the ground. He must know them

backward and forward, top and bottom, so well that no possible question of doubt or disbelief can upset his confidence, either actually or apparently.

He must have an answer prepared for every doubting question, and an argument against every suggestion of fault. He must have an infinite amount of enthusiasm himself for the goods. There can be no enthusiasm developed on the part of the customer without a corresponding enthusiasm in the seller.

The salesman who goes out with a new specialty on his list or in his sample case goes out with a weapon which may be used to put old General Apathy out of business.

We are all willing and even anxious to learn about something new connected with our own business. If we are live business men, we are looking for new ways to do more work at less cost, to give bigger value for less money. This keeps us in an open mental attitude regarding an article that is offered for the first time.

The clever salesman knows this and he regards the new item as an asset which will help him to get the ear of a prospective customer, if not for the new article itself, perhaps for something else. New specialties are makers of openings and opportunities for salesmanship on the old lines.

The one really important thing to bear in mind in connection with telling a customer about the new article is that business for your house will result only when the customer actually buys.

The sample should be brought out, the photograph shown, or the catalog cut exhibited with a view to selling some of the goods, not merely with a view to letting the buyer know that such a thing has been

put on the market for him to buy some day when he gets ready.

What a salesman does with any line, new or old, depends to a large extent upon what he expects to do, what he sets out to do. If you set out to "introduce" a specialty you will merely introduce it. If you set out to sell it you will make sales.

A salesman ought not to be merely willing to take up new items of stock; he ought to be looking for opportunities to do it.

The salesman who thinks his success lies in a standard, staple line, into which few or no novelties or new items are introduced, should consider, when he thinks of himself as an all-around salesman, what he would do in selling such a line as books, in which nearly every item is something new, in which every year's product is utterly different from that of the preceding year. Or what would he do at selling stocks and bonds, with no such things as staples, or selling publishing properties or real estate, with every individual sale a different proposition, a novelty, so to say?

They say that every salesman falls into one of two classes—a slow closer or a quick closer of sales. Did you ever think of it in that way? Have you ever considered in which of these two classes you would be placed by your fellow salesmen or by your house?

You have a reputation as a salesman of a certain kind. It may be that it would open your eyes to know what that reputation is. Perhaps you have been jogging along in a sort of self-satisfied way, secure in the regular receipt of your salary and expense checks, knowing that you make a fair number

of sales, but never thinking whether you are regarded as a live wire or not, never even wondering what the boss does think of you or how he classifies you.

Just take notice on your next trip of how long it takes you to make your sales. Time each visit and sale to get your average time. Then, when you go out with a new specialty, watch yourself and see how long it takes you to close up the new proposition with each prospect.

In doing this, don't get the idea of finding out what you are doing mixed up with the idea of trying to establish a record, or of seeing how fast you can work without regard to how much you accomplish. It is worse to hurry along just to see what speed you can make than to err in the opposite direction.

A good many salesmen err in making the introduction of their new goods an incidental matter. They get their staple order clinched, close up the order book and button up their coats, and just as they are ready to depart they throw out a remark about the new item as a casual incident. The idea may be to leave this stray seed to germinate during their absence, so they can profit next trip by its growth. The chances are that, like other seeds that fall by the wayside, it will not develop a successful growth. If sometimes such a lone seed does sprout, if it produces a lone kernel for reaping next trip, what kind of a harvest can be expected from one seed?

Any line of talk handed out as an afterthought, or apparently as such, will receive just about the attention it deserves. The buyer has already begun to think of other things when the order is given. He is merely waiting for the salesman to go. The attention which for a time was concentrated on the line

has disappeared. He wishes you would be on your way with your talk about new specialties.

If you had brought up the matter of the specialty first, it would have received the attention it needed, and its position at the beginning of your talk would have shown it to be worthy of consideration.

If you are so full of interest in some new thing that it crops right out as soon as you get a chance to talk; if you are so enthusiastic about it that you cannot refrain from trying to impart that enthusiasm at the first opportunity, can your prospect fail to be impressed with the fact that you believe in the goods and are sincerely advocating them?

The way to introduce goods is to introduce them. You have not introduced them until you have sold them. It is easy to secure an apparent interest in them. It is easy to get promises to buy at another time, but the only real introduction that counts is getting the buyer's name on the dotted line.

Get rid of the idea that "introducing" means something different and perhaps more professional than selling. Eliminate any question of ethics in the matter and get down to the brass tacks of turning mere talk into written orders.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SALESMAN AND THE CATALOG

CATALOGS are more attractive than they used to be, and thus more recipients are led to investigate their contents and to save them against a possible need later. And the average business man is more inclined than formerly to make his catalogs a part of his equipment, giving them space in his business library.

If catalogs have not been given respectful attention in the past, in many cases it has been due to the fact that there was nothing about them or about the method of their presentation to inspire respect.

Cheaply printed catalogs that looked as if they were made by a blind printer with scarcely any time and not much ink, disgusted the more intelligent business man. The information in them may have been complete if he could have read it. The prices may have been low. The house may have been reliable. None of these points counted with the recipient because the appearance of the book was so bad that he did not look into it.

But conditions have changed and now catalogs are well made, well printed, attractively illustrated. They are a delight to the eye. They are worthy of the attention of any business man, and no man can afford to neglect or ignore their appeal. Still, many customers even now pay too little attention to the catalog, regarding it merely as a piece of advertising matter, to be saved if it looks interesting, to be dis-

carded if it does not represent a line for which there is immediate need.

Just where should the traveling salesman's interest in catalogs come in? The catalog is in itself something of a salesman, a silent salesman. Is it a competitor of the personal salesman? Not when both represent the house. It is rather an assistant.

Once in a while a salesman feels that if his customers are encouraged in the use of the catalog they will be ordering between his trips, and he thinks this may affect his commissions or his prestige. That, however, is a short-sighted attitude. If the customer does not have your catalog for use in ordering when he is in need, he may have the catalog or even the salesman of some competitor, and thus another manufacturer will get a wedge started into your business.

The catalog supplements the salesman's work and should prove very valuable in helping to hold the customer's trade.

No salesman can make his territory often enough so that his customers will never need goods between calls. The most foresighted buyer will now and then find himself in need of something a day after the salesman has called. There will be breaks, accidents, unexpected situations, suddenly increased demands, and the house that is not represented by a catalog, and well represented at that, will lose orders, because some other house is taking care that its goods are represented not merely when a traveling salesman calls around but all the time. The best of our customers forgets us more easily than we like to believe.

The salesman and the catalog are working together. Both are trying to sell goods for the house. The salesman has no reason to feel jealous of a

handsome catalog. He ought to be proud of it, and the catalog ought not to be neglected as to quality and completeness just because the trade is called upon regularly by salesmen. The better the catalog, the more intelligent will be the buyer, and the more general his purchases from one source.

Every traveling man knows the feeling of relief that comes over him when he drops in to see a prospective customer and meets with some remark like this: "Oh, yes, I've just been looking up your line in the catalog, and I believe I could use some of the goods if you would explain," etc. Of course the salesman can explain. The sale was ready-made and just waiting for him.

The salesman ought to make it a part, and an important part of his business, too, to boost the catalog of his house. He ought to help in any way he can in its preparation. The man who makes up the catalog may be well informed on the products of the house, probably better informed than the salesman. He may know every last thing about typography and make-up, display and illustrations, but it is dollars to doughnuts that he doesn't begin to know as well as the traveling men what the customers will want to find in that catalog.

The salesman knows what questions the trade asks, what explanations should be made about each item of stock. He knows what illustrations ought to be shown to enable the customer to judge from the pictures and descriptions just what the goods are like.

The salesman will realize, too, the importance of talking in the catalog in language the customer will understand. It is easy to make a catalog so technical or so high-brow as to be over the head of the average

customer. What the catalog users want is practical information.

If I were getting out a catalog of any line of goods, I would ask several of my salesmen to read the copy through before it was ever put in type, and I would ask them to be perfectly frank in criticising it. The salesmen are the point of contact with the buyer. They know what he is like personally. They know his interests and his needs.

If I were a salesman and knew the house was getting out a new catalog, I would try to bore in somewhere and find out what the catalog was to be like, how it read, and what kind of pictures would be in it. I would feel that it was my business to get in touch with the production of the silent assistant that would be sent out in my territory to work beside me. I would feel it was my right to have a look-in on the production of that book, which, until my arrival, many prospective buyers would regard as representative of the house.

The salesman ought to know his line and the details about it, but no man can carry an extensive line in his head. A catalog will be of great help to the salesman, and he ought to use it. He ought to make use of it for the sake of accuracy, and it will pay him to bring it out and use it in the presence of his customers, because it will familiarize them with it, reminding them that they have the same source of information all the time, and indicating that it is authoritative. For the salesman himself to use the catalog gives it a standing with the customer, who may have felt that to get the real, genuine authoritative information he must talk to a representative of the house. The salesman ought to be careful not to

discredit the catalog or indicate exceptions to its statements.

The salesman ought to go further than merely to show the customer that there is a catalog and a reliable one. He ought to call attention to it and ask the buyer whether he has one of his own and whether it is the latest edition. He will do well, instead of using his own catalog, to ask for the customer's, thus bringing familiarity with it nearer home and finding out how the catalog is regarded.

If the salesman cannot distribute catalogs, he can at least be an important factor in seeing that the distribution is effective. He can correct lists, adding names. He can find out whether the catalogs have reached their destination in good condition. He can and he should boost the catalog wherever he sees it.

The nearer the buyer comes to using the catalog as a handbook, the better it will be for the house and for its salesmen. The latter ought to miss no opportunities to impress the buyers with the value of the catalog and with the importance of keeping it on file where it can be found quickly if needed as a help in handling a sale.

CHAPTER XIX

NETTING A PROFIT

YOUR employers are in business to make money. Unless they secure a net profit on their business each year, they might better sell out to someone else.

You are in business to make money. If you had to work for just salary enough to cover the absolutely necessary expenses of your family and yourself, you would not feel that your job was a profitable one and you would be looking around for another.

Consider this situation. Your boss started in business perhaps as a small manufacturer. Let us even suppose that he began with no salesmen at all, selling his output for himself. When he reached the point where he could produce more goods than he alone could sell he needed help on the selling end; so he added a salesman.

If that salesman sold just enough goods so that the profit on them covered the cost of his services, where was his employer any better off for his assistance? He did more business, but he incurred the increased responsibility only to make his gross sales larger. He had no more money left at the end of the year.

If he added a dozen or a hundred salesmen on that same basis, he simply increased his investment, his responsibility, his chance of failure. There are not many manufacturers today who are anxious to do more business just for the sake of being the big noise in the trade. The general desire is to get more

profit, more dividends for the folks who are supplying the sinews of war.

You know what this means. It means that if you are selling just enough goods to pay what you are costing the house, the house is no better off for your services. As a matter of fact, you are a drag on the progress of the concern because you are taking up territory which a better salesman could make produce a net profit.

There are many reasons why you may not be producing any profit. It may be that you think you are doing pretty well. You sell a good many goods every trip. You seem to hold your trade. The same old customers always have an order for you. You are honest and loyal to the concern. You get along with your fellow salesmen and you never have any trouble with buyers. You come into the conventions of the selling force and sit and listen attentively to the ginger-talks and the inspirational addresses, and you agree with all that has been said and develop a fair degree of the "whoop-it-up" spirit. But no matter if all these things are true of you, what does it profit the house if you still sell only enough goods to pay your salary and expenses?

Are you going to feel offended if you are asked to speed up your efforts a little? Will you take offense if the sales manager intimates that it is up to you to sell more goods? If you are not producing any of the net income of the house, the sales manager is not onto his job if he does not put it up to you to do better.

Why, nowadays we even look disparagingly at a farmer who does not know enough about his dairy to know which of his cows are paying him a profit

and which are simply "boarders," and we don't think much of the business ability of the farmer who does not know what each cow is doing. When a cow proves to be just a boarder, I don't suppose she likes being herded off with a lot of old "bandboxes" and shipped to the market, but she has to go.

You may as well make up your mind that unless you produce you are going to be dropped like the "boarder" cow. Business does not admit of much altruism in the management of a force of salesmen. Whether corporations are soulless or not, they have a way of requiring a profit from each department. They may dig down into the treasury for proper charitable objects, but they do not knowingly carry a dead weight in the way of non-profit-producing salesmen.

Why don't you make some investigations, ask some questions, with a view to finding out about how much your sales must be to cover your cost to your employers? It might surprise you to know that, although it has seemed to you that you were making money for them, in reality you were just holding your job, with nothing to spare.

I don't suggest your getting this information with a view to doing just enough to insure your retaining your position. When you have discovered that you ought to be doing better, don't set any limit on how much better you are going to try to do. Make up your mind to establish a new record for every trip, for every month.

I have heard salesmen complain that they had no share in the profits of the concern and that they would be darned, or something like that, if they would work their heads off just to produce dividends

for a lot of millionaires who did nothing but sit around and count their wealth.

Well, this is not a discussion of the wisdom or folly of a profit-sharing plan. It is a discussion of a condition rather than a theory. It is a fact that if a line of goods does not make a profit, or if a salesman does not make a profit, that line of goods or that salesman will be dropped.

What difference does it make to you whether your work produces a profit for a millionaire or for a man who works as hard as you for what he gets out of the concern? The thing that does matter to you is whether you make yourself sufficiently necessary so that you are kept in your position and your salary advanced.

You have heard salesmen say, or you may have said: "I've been with the house five years, and it's time they gave me another raise." Absolute tommy-rot! As if salaries are to be raised by the calendar. If you have produced satisfactory results for the concern for a certain length of time, and are apparently going to produce still more satisfactory results in the future, there is reason for expecting a raise. When you make a new record for selling efficiency, and do something more than your actual share in boosting the net profits of the concern; when you show yourself to have been a real factor in the success of the year's business, then you are eligible for a raise. Successful salesmanship is something more than an endurance contest.

The increased salaries are going to be awarded to the men who increase the net profits. You might even increase your actual gross sales without having increased your net profits. To quote cut prices or

to make special concessions as to finish or equipment, or in any other way to increase the aggregate of your sales and at the same time to cut down the net profit on the order, may result in less return for the house instead of more.

When you set out to establish a new record for your territory for a certain period, keep in mind the fact that the keen eyes of the treasurer are upon the net return from the business you turn in rather than upon the total footing of the invoices.

Of course the salesman is not primarily responsible for fixing the prices on the products he sells. These are fixed by men who are supposed to be familiar with every detail of the costs of production, advertising and selling. They are men who make the prices of raw material and the expenses of overhead their study. They find out what the goods cost when put on board the car for shipment, and their costs include your salary and expenses. But they have to figure on each salesman selling more goods, a good many more goods than will pay his cost.

Take all this into consideration, then, when you are thinking over the matter of prices. When you are planning to write in or to go in and have a talk with the management about reducing prices to meet competition, just bear in mind that there is something more to reducing prices than merely hacking at them with the big knife.

If all there were to putting down prices were the changing of price lists or discounts, it would be a simple thing, and in a little while the buyer would be able to get goods delivered to him with a bonus for taking them. Unfortunately, the cut in a price

does not stop with the cut. It goes back to the net profit and makes itself felt there. And every salesman knows there is a limit to the amount that can be lopped off from the net.

Before making your chief comment at the meeting of salesmen one of a criticism of prices, find out for sure whether the real reason you are not selling when you go up against competition is due to the other fellow's price being lower or to the other fellow's ability being higher.

It is rarely that price alone sells to the shrewd buyer. That sort of buyer likes a good price, but he likes better to get good goods. He has no use for an article which can be bought with an extra ten per cent discount from the price and an accompanying fifteen per cent discount from the quality.

Rarely will a buyer be found who has any serious objections to the manufacturer making a fair profit on his goods. If the goods are right and the price in accordance with a standard maintained on such goods by all reliable makers, the user will not object, and while your customer, like all of us, will want to buy as cheaply as he can, he will not be dissatisfied with your standard rate.

One way in which a good many salesmen cut into the net return on their sales is by unnecessary expenses. There is a not unique feeling that the expense account is fair game for anything that can be put over by that route. Some salesmen who are absolutely honest in other ways will stretch the expense account until an extra dime would break it.

Aside from the fact that it is not the method of an honest business man to slip items into the expense account that do not properly belong there, it may

well be remembered that this same expense account is what eats up a lot of what would otherwise be net profit on sales.

When you save money on your expenses you are not merely putting that money into the pocket of somebody else. You are helping to make your services pay a net return, and it is the net return that in the end is going to determine your chance of getting more salary. A dollar saved in the expense account will do as much for your net return as an increase of many dollars in sales.

By every means possible increase the net profit attributable to your services. Make as many sales and as large sales as you can, but don't forget there is something more to your successful selling than the size of the orders you turn in.

CHAPTER XX

CO-OPERATING WITH THE HOUSE

SOME traveling salesmen take almost as much interest in the advertising their house is doing as the advertising man himself. Others hardly know that any advertising is being done.

The advertising done by a manufacturer is often supplementary in character. It is not done to bring in immediate orders, but rather to develop such an interest that inquiries will result which will lead to calls by the salesmen or to the subsequent development of sales through correspondence.

Or the advertising is intended to familiarize the user or dealer with the name and character of the product, so that when he is called upon by a salesman it will be easier to interest him in buying.

In any case, it will be seen that the advertising is a help to salesmen, that it is carried on with a view to making their work easier and more resultful.

Since the house is doing this to help you, the least you can do is to reciprocate. In order to help you to make more sales the management is spending its good money for space in trade papers, general publications, and to some degree in circular letters, folders and booklets. It is appropriating considerable money every year for one form or another of publicity. It all counts for you.

Make it your business to find out what kind of advertising the house is putting before the people who are your prospective customers. The sales manager is going to keep you informed to a certain

degree, but don't leave it all to him. Make it your business to get the information as well as his to give it. Assume responsibility at your end of the rope.

It is your business as a part of the organization to know what the organization is trying to do. It is up to you to take an interest in the methods being followed and in the advertising plans that are being carried out.

Aside from any duty you may have in the matter, it will pay you. It will make your work easier and more fruitful if you will study the work being done in advertising your line.

If you pay no attention to what your house is advertising in the trade papers, for instance, you will not be in a position to take advantage of that advertising.

Good advertising of this sort familiarizes the buyer of your goods with their talking points. It keeps him informed as to the latest improvements. When you call on him he knows in advance something about what you have to offer.

If you call on a reader of the advertising of your house and say nothing about the things he has seen advertised over its name, that advertising is going to lose some of its effect, because he will think that if the points advertised were as important as the advertising indicates you would be mentioning them.

Also, if the reader of the advertising has been "sold" on the points mentioned in the ads, you will lose by not taking advantage of the start that has been made for you in that way.

The house is entitled to your intelligent support

of its advertising, and the better your support, the better your sales.

Study every bit of printed matter put out about the goods you are pushing. Do this because you will be the better for getting hold of all the information you can about the line, and because it is important that you know what the house has to say about its goods to its customers.

The instructions you get from headquarters may be complete. They may cover everything told to the customer in any form, but more likely they do not. Some houses are remarkably lax in the matter of seeing that their salesmen are as well informed as the customers are who read all their literature. There is a large duty incumbent upon the house in this matter, but this does not in any degree relieve the salesman from his share of the duty.

Many manufacturers waste opportunity because they do not appreciate the importance of keeping their selling force informed. I believe that when the salesmen are gathered together in the kind of annual meeting that every manufacturer nowadays realizes is helpful to efficient work, the advertising of the house should be fully explained, and the explanation should as far as possible cover plans for the future. If the salesman knows to what he may look forward he can the better take advantage of it when the time comes.

Whether the advertising be trade paper, general, circular, booklet or catalog, samples of it should be a part of the salesman's reading matter until he is familiar with it. The careful study of the advertising of your house will give you a broader outlook on the field of your business. It will help you to

understand your own line better and it will help you to appreciate the policy of the management as it looks to the customer.

Then, too, the study of the advertising will be educational and it will lead you to pay more attention to what other houses are doing, thus increasing your familiarity with competition. It will be well for you to study the advertising of your competitors when you can, in order to learn about their featured selling points.

It always raises a salesman in the estimation of the buyer if the former knows about extraneous things concerning which the latter asks. Your prospective customer is almost as likely to ask you about some point connected with your competitor's line as about those of your own. If you can answer intelligently you gain the greatest respect of the buyer and you get nearer to him.

Occasionally a house asks its traveling men to distribute something that may be called advertising, and the traveling men take the "I wasn't hired to do that" attitude. Aside from the fact that such an attitude is an unprofitable one, it is a mistake for the salesman to miss any chance to get more information about his goods into the hands of possible purchasers. Of course you cannot make of yourself a walking peddler of printed matter, but if the sales manager wants your help in getting out some particularly valuable piece of literature it will be the best thing for you and the business if you do the work cheerfully.

The salesman can help the advertising department to check up its work by making inquiries about the receipt of certain catalogs, etc. An inquiry about

the receipt of the annual catalog will not infrequently be just enough to save it from the waste basket.

Sometimes the actual buyer of a concern allows his catalogs and other such mail to come through the hands of a clerk or assistant who may arrogate to himself too much authority and save himself labor by destroying all but the most important pieces. Whatever may be the advantage or disadvantage of this to that concern, the destruction of the catalog of your house before reaching its ultimate destination is hurtful to your selling prospects.

Make it your business, whenever opportunity offers, to throw in an inquiry to find out what treatment the catalog has received. If there is some especially good feature in the new catalog, it will be an easy and a natural thing to ask incidentally whether that has been noticed, thus at the same time calling attention to the catalog and to its most important feature.

If your house does no advertising—well, I do not wish to condemn non-advertisers indiscriminately, but I think it may fairly be said that your chance of advancement is better with a house that advertises than with one that does not. Advertising is a fundamental part of modern business-getting, and few live houses neglect the opportunities offered by all suitable mediums.

Perhaps if yours is a non-advertising house and you feel that policy to be a mistake, you can do something to effect a change. The opinion of the selling force on such a matter, if intelligently grounded and sensible, will go far to convince the management of what its position should be. If you believe in advertising, encourage your house to do it. If it already

advertises, show your appreciation of the fact by coöperation, and try to offer intelligent, constructive suggestions about the work.

Coöperation, of course, concerns more things than advertising, but in the main the other things are covered in the other phases of salesmanship. Co-operation, too, is necessarily two-sided, and the sales manager or whoever stands in the relation of "boss" to the salesmen must not forget that coöperation should begin at home. The success of a business demands that the two representative forces, the man at the front and the man behind, pull together.

When the salesman and the sales manager do not get along together there are two possible sources of difficulty. The salesman is one of these and the sales manager is the other. Sometimes one is wrong; sometimes the other; sometimes both.

In any event the trouble is obvious, and there ought to be a prompt effort to remedy it by bringing it up at once for frank discussion. Any man, employer or employed, who lets ill-feeling rankle in his mind without going at once to headquarters with his complaint, will find himself developing a grouch against the house that will result in disaster to his enthusiasm. A grouch is sure to crowd out of the mind everything else. No sales manager with a grouch can keep his selling force delivering their quota of business.

The fact that the sales manager is placed over the salesman does not relieve him from the responsibility of giving that salesman fair treatment. The employer or manager who does not acknowledge to himself that he owes the man under him more than

mechanical attention falls far short of realizing his duty as a man and as a manager.

Sales managers ought to realize that many salesmen in search of positions are just as anxious to get the right sort of employers as those sales managers are to get the right sort of employees. The salesman has the same right to be discriminating that the sales manager has, and he is exercising that right with a good deal more intelligence than ever before. He knows what sales managers are making good and helping their salesmen to make good.

The salesman and the sales manager must be coöperating forces. Neither can hope to succeed in spite of the other, but either may expect success with the other's help.

CHAPTER XXI

THE VALUE OF OPTIMISM

THE optimist is the fellow who goes out and does it while the rest are sitting around saying, "It can't be done." The optimist says, "It's a fine day." The pessimist says, "It's a weather-breeder." The optimist calls it a "fine rain;" the pessimist calls it a "nasty storm." Ask a pessimist how business is and he replies, "There ain't no such animal." Ask an optimist and he says, "It's better than I expected it to be."

It is not the condition of the weather or the business situation that makes pessimists. They are born so or have allowed themselves to become so through habit and carelessness.

Some men are born with an optimistic tendency, of optimistic parents, and brought up in an atmosphere of optimism. Perhaps such men have no reason to take credit for possessing a happy outlook on life. Other men have made optimists of themselves by sheer good sense. They have seen what a difference it makes in the result of their work, what a value good feelings have in making it easy to get along with folks. They have simply reduced it to a matter of business and have set about the development of optimism as a regular business asset.

And still other men have been born apparently neutral in regard to optimism and pessimism, and have followed the easy way, letting the corners of their mouths drop because the force of gravity works

that way, maintaining a sober instead of a smiling face because it requires effort to smile. These are very apt to become confirmed pessimists.

The worst cases of all are the men who are born pessimistic, of parents who never looked on the bright side, weighed down even in youth by a feeling that there's no use trying. I cannot imagine any of these born-so pessimists getting on in the business of selling anything worth while, unless they work the remarkable miracle with their natures and become optimists through main force of character.

Nobody loves a pessimist or wants one around. If you find yourself developing pessimistic tendencies, just make up your mind that it is only a question of time when you will be an unwelcome guest wherever you go. People who are themselves pessimistic do not care to associate with pessimists. They particularly want to hear optimistic talk, though they will not acknowledge there is anything in it when they hear it.

But the optimist is sure to find that all doors open to him with comparative ease. People are looking for good news, for reports of better times coming, of more business or larger profits. They want to know something pleasant about the prospects for the future.

The difference between the optimist's and the pessimist's reports about the market may not vary much in actual fact, but the difference in the manner of presenting the facts will perhaps represent the difference between an agreeable and an unfavorable outlook. The optimist will bring the favorable conditions to the front and dwell upon them, helping them to show at full value. The pessimist leaves

the favorable things in the background and presents the reverse.

The outlook we present to a customer depends more upon what we say and how we say it than upon the actual situation. We tell the buyer certain important things about the phases presented by the market, and we leave him to fill in something from his own knowledge and imagination. We cannot present the whole situation in minute detail. The question is whether we are going to present the optimistic side of the situation in an optimistic way or whether we will fail to rise to the occasion and put enough enthusiasm into our point of view to make it plausible.

The best proposition, backed by the most favorable conditions for its presentation, will lose its value if offered in a half-hearted way, with a tone of voice and an expression of countenance that indicate no real enthusiasm behind.

Why, there is no more chance of a salesman with the habitual pessimistic frame of mind getting a selling talk heeded when the buyer is not prepared to buy anyway, than there is of the millennium coming this year.

We naturally associate the pessimist with faults and undesirable attributes that do not belong to him. Because he is down in the mouth we think of him as being down at the heels. Because he looks on the dark side we regard him as a regular "gloom" himself. Because of his untidy habits of mind we are very likely to think of him as personally untidy. In spite of ourselves we judge him harshly. We do not even give the devil his due.

Any pessimist who will take stock of his mental

condition and arouse himself to an appreciation of his mental deficiencies can make himself over, eliminating his discouragement. We have all heard of whistling to keep up courage, and some of us have found that there is something in it. Well, the pessimist can make use of a similar psychology. If he will admit his pessimistic tendencies and the need for getting them out of his system, he can eradicate them. It will help a good deal if he will just say to himself over and over again, day after day, that line of Browning's, "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world." To tell ourselves that things are coming our way, that times are better, that business is looking up, that we are feeling good, will have its effect.

Some folks, I know, laugh at this kind of psychology. They say you cannot make times good by merely saying they are good, that you cannot get rid of a bilious liver by saying you haven't one. Technically all that may be true, but, practically, optimistic talk does help to make optimistic conditions. And, conversely, genuinely optimistic conditions will never come about, certainly never be realized, as long as we persist in claiming they do not exist. Every bit of common sense, theoretical or practical, is on the side of optimism.

One of the most important considerations is that optimism begets optimism and pessimism begets pessimism. As long as we hold to one of these attitudes, we can be certain the other is not going to thrust itself upon us. Did you ever know of a chronic pessimist turned optimist against his will, or even while he waited inertly for the change? Did you ever know good times, good fortune, fat orders, big

commissions to change a man's mental attitude materially? The natural tendency seems to be down hill. If we make no effort we become less optimistic, although we are born optimists. The pessimist with a fortune left to him is still a pessimist unless he makes an effort to get out of that rut. And the optimist who does not try to keep on his optimistic plane will in time degenerate into a pessimist.

We have to keep trying if we are to develop better mental conditions. Optimism does not happen to one, like drawing a capital prize in a lottery. It does not fall on one like an apple from an orchard tree. It does not come with being wished for. There is nothing easy and nothing miraculous about developing the optimistic attitude out of a limited supply of the raw material.

This much we can say for optimism: it grows rapidly when given a fair chance.

The colored preacher prayed, "O Lord, fill our souls with the spark of thy divine love and water it with showers of blessings." I do not recommend watering the spark of optimism to make it grow brighter, but I know that if there is such a spark it will grow if it is fanned, and if it is a seed instead of a spark, it will grow if it is watered. Whatever form the beginnng of optimism takes in your mind, watch it and encourage it in the best way and it will increase.

Pessimism does not have to be encouraged. It is a weed for growth, and it develops itself fast enough and crowds its unwelcome presence into every place where there is room—and if there is no room, it makes room. When a man finds pessimism getting a start, the best thing he can do is to get a new pack-

ing put into his mental power pump and spray the thing with something that will cause it to curl up and die of discouragement.

Optimism is just as welcome as pessimism is unwelcome. We all like the good-feeling chap who always has something cheerful to say and some good news to tell. This fellow is always looking for good news, so he finds enough of it to encourage him. He is thinking cheerful thoughts, so it is easy for him to say cheerful things.

Any man who can train himself to bring with him into a buyer's office an atmosphere of optimism and good feeling doesn't need to be big physically to carry out the impression. It is enough that he is big mentally. A man's physical size is less important than his mental size. Nobody will get any inspiration or any optimistic impressions from a little-minded man.

Optimism is more important in business than almost anywhere else. Our whole lives are colored by our business experiences. What we are at home, on our vacations, in our hours of leisure, depends upon what we are in our work. If we are downhearted while lugging our selling arguments around on our territory, we cannot become lighthearted the minute we lay aside our business habiliments and descend into private life. If we are going to have any fun in life, any good times, we must develop optimism.

Good sales, it may be thought, will develop optimism. Probably they help make it easier to develop it, but they will not develop it of themselves. On the other hand, optimism will go a long way toward developing good sales. Optimism is the best known

attitude for a grouch. You cannot do business while carrying a grouch. Whether it is natural or not, whether you want to be or not, be optimistic. With all your getting, get optimism!

CHAPTER XXII

CURING DIFFIDENCE

DIFFIDENCE is really another name for bashfulness, but perhaps it would sound childish to talk about bashfulness in a traveling salesman. Anyway, the general public does not carry the idea that traveling men are very bashful. It might be difficult to convince even a buyer that any of the salesmen calling on him were ever troubled with diffidence.

Still, the fact remains that a large proportion of business men, whether they take up the work of selling on the road or whether they go into some less red-blooded occupation, are naturally diffident. It was at first only with great effort that they tackled a strange buyer, and it may remain to the end of their days a considerable effort.

You cannot determine by a man's appearance whether he is bashful or not. Plenty of men who could at first scarcely bring themselves to march into a buyer's presence, even when sent for, develop the ability to hide their diffidence completely. There are probably instances in which the salesman covers up his diffidence too deeply. He becomes brazen. He shows too much "nerve."

Any old salesman who will tell the truth about it will acknowledge that time and again he has allowed his diffidence to keep him from saying to a buyer what he knew he ought to say and what he believed would help to make a sale. His bashfulness has stood in the way of his making his sales what they should have been.

Of course diffidence is foolish. There is nothing about a buyer really to frighten a salesman. No one is going to offer physical violence to a man for trying in a gentlemanly manner to sell him goods. We walk in and ask a man if he is in need of certain goods, and go through our customary formula, and we do this easily enough, but when it comes to making the extra effort, to going into the matter further in an individual and personal way, we feel something within us balking. It is the old bashfulness of our kid days reasserting itself in a grown-up way.

But a salesman can overcome his bashfulness in each individual case, and he can overcome it as a habit to such an extent that it will seldom trouble him. As a matter of fact, if a salesman hopes to get somewhere near to the top of the ladder, he must overcome it, not once, but every time it crops out.

A resolution made on the first of each January that we will not allow diffidence to get the better of us any longer is not going to do the trick. A resolution made every morning that today we will assert ourselves and maintain our independence of the influence of that old kid habit will be more to the point and more effective. Before going in to call on a buyer who is particularly cranky and crabbed this resolution ought to be brought to the surface and studied and strengthened for use.

If there is something out of the usual you want to say to the man you are about to sell, fix that statement in your mind in just exactly the words you want to use. Say it over and over again until it is as familiar as A B C. Get it down so fine that you can say it right while thinking about something else, or even while trying to say something else.

Then, when the opportunity comes for you to say your little piece, you will not be restrained by diffidence. Even though you are shaking in your shoes and the buyer is glaring at you with a vengeance through his tortoise-rimmed glasses, your statement will carry itself through without any visible effort on your part. What you want to say will be said by your lips without even using your mind at all. Your voice will become a machine which will work when you drop a command into the slot. You will not have to work around to the point and you will not have to screw up your courage to the sticking point. As soon as the time is ready for your speech, you will "fire it" without hesitation.

The reason a man's diffidence gets control of him is because he stops to think about it. If you do not stop to think, you will have little trouble in proceeding. If it is ever true that he who hesitates is lost, it is true of the man trying to overcome his diffidence. If you stop to think, your diffidence at once takes possession of your mind and your chance to overwhelm it is gone.

After you have successfully overcome diffidence a few times and assused yourself that nothing will harm you, you will discover the tendency growing less. You will gain in self-confidence. You will find that buyers do not attack you even when you get out of the rut and say unusual things. You will see that you are as big a man and as good a man as the buyer himself and that there is no reason why you should stand in awe of him, though there be every reason why you should show him due deference.

One of the best things to cure diffidence is the absolute necessity for making sales. A man can do many

apparently impossible things if he but thinks he *must* do them. Determination will accomplish just about anything you set out to accomplish.

If you are so diffident; if the quality is so ingrained in you that you cannot get it out of your system, then you are not cut out for a salesman. You are too badly handicapped, and it would be better if you would get into some occupation where you would not be called upon to put up a bold front toward your fellow men.

The timid, shrinking, backward chap, unless he has it in him to eradicate such qualities, will not make a highly successful salesman. He may be able to earn a living on the road, but that is not real success.

The man who is diffident will have trouble not only in selling his goods, in developing a bigger business in his territory, but he will have trouble in selling himself. Your success depends in a measure upon your selling yourself to your employers. When you have reached the limit in one position, if you are to go onward to the top, you will have to begin somewhere below the top in another concern. Unless you have assurance and the ability to appear to good advantage before men, how are you going to impress a new employer with the idea that you are a coming man?

If you cannot overcome your diffidence and your modesty, can you walk into a sales manager's office and present to him in a convincing way your qualifications for the position he has open?

For the good of your present job and the increase of your sales and for the good of your future, you must eradicate your diffidence. Just as sure as you pay little or no attention to this characteristic, let-

ting it go with hoping you will get over it, and getting out of every embarrassing situation as easily as possible, just so sure you will never be the man called into the office when they want to offer somebody something particularly good in the way of advancement.

Just because a fault is inherent is no reason for continuing to suffer from it. It is discouraging to hear men say in a resigned tone, "Well, that's the way I was made and I can't help it."

You can help it. I don't care how crooked you were made, physically, mentally or morally, you can help it. You can do something to get straight, to set yourself right.

The first thing is to find out in what way you are crooked and what means will help straighten out the kinks. The next thing is to try—and try hard—to get straight.

Anything worth accomplishing is worth a lot of hard trying. Get behind this diffidence of yours and make up your mind that you will get rid of it. Keep in that frame of mind for a while and you will find that you are making good.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SALESMAN AND HIS STOMACH

NOBODY feels very proud and not many can retain their self-respect in full and a high degree of self-confidence when riding in an automobile with the paint peeling off, the metal parts turning rusty, the wind-shield broken and the upholstery burst open. The fact that the motor is working all right is not sufficient compensation for the ill appearance of the outfit.

On the other hand, it does not make much difference how bright and shiny the nickel and glass are, how bright the paint and how new the tires, if the engine is out of order. Polished nickel trimmings, fourteen coats of finish, eleven-inch upholstery, cantilever springs and wire wheels will not run the car a mile if the motor will not start.

Did it ever occur to you that you are subject to a good many of the same rules as an automobile? Your engine has many parts, but the stomach is the equivalent of the cylinders, and since you haven't as many stomachs as a camel, you need to give more attention to the one you have. Do you realize how completely your efficiency depends upon your stomach? A salesman, like an army, travels on his stomach. That is somewhat different from traveling for your stomach. Don't get the two confused. It is the difference between living to eat and eating to live.

If your stomach is out of order your brain does not work right. You lack energy. You haven't half the

horsepower you should develop. You cannot be efficient or successful.

If your stomach is wrong when you come down in the morning, you are going to start the day wrong. You would not think of spending half the night putting the engine of your car *out of order* when you were going for an all-day run the next day, would you?

You know what it means to start in the morning with your stomach wrong. It means to start with a grouch. It means to start late and to be slow in getting under way. It means that when night comes it will find you with only half a day's work done, and that half not done very well. It puts you half a day behind for the whole trip.

Care in regard to your dress and personal appearance and manner will not enable you to do business right if your stomach is wrong. There are plenty of men who look all right when decked out for a special occasion, but who lack absolutely the energy to handle their trade properly. There are some automobiles with sixty-horsepower paint and sixteen-horsepower motors.

Of course, nobody really likes to do business with a sloppy-looking salesman, even though he may be bubbling over with energy; but if you cannot have both energy and good appearance, it is better to have the energy, the good stomach.

We have to give a certain amount of credit to the automobile that gets there, that delivers the goods in spite of its dilapidated appearance, and we admit about the same kind of a regard for the man who gets there in spite of an unfortunate appearance.

As a matter of fact, the man who can succeed while

looking badly must have used a good deal more energy than would have been necessary had his appearance been better. It is less credit to a man to succeed in spite of untidy dress and manners than to have sense enough to correct those handicaps.

Of course, it is not fair to blame the stomach for all the disorders one feels, but, when all is said and done, if you treat your stomach as it has a right to ask you will get rid of ninety per cent of your physical discomforts and disadvantages.

If you do not get a good night's sleep you cannot do a good day's work, and a maltreated stomach will have its say about your night's rest. You may put in full time after an uneasy night and you may call on the regular number of prospective customers, but you will not make as many or as large sales. If you do accomplish all that could have been accomplished that day anyway, you may be sure you have done it at an unreasonable cost in strength.

Your greatest asset is your health. Without health you could not enjoy a fortune in money. Without health you cannot succeed as a salesman, no matter how good a house you represent, no matter how important a line you are trying to sell. A good stomach and a strong body are worth more to you than any amount of cash capital.

Eating what you need to develop a proper amount of energy and to sustain life and activity is one thing, and eating all you want is another. Eating all you want at meal times and then stuffing with extras between meals will have its effect in time. Topping off heavy meals with unnecessary, rich desserts will have its effect some day, though all you may notice now is an increasing rotundity of figure.

Every sensible motorist knows that just because his car will do its fifty or sixty miles an hour is no possible reason for thinking it will stand that pace as well as a slower. Many cars that will go a mile a minute are not built for mile-a-minute travel, and one mile at that rate will age them as much as fifty miles at half that speed. Just because an engine will do certain extreme things is no excuse for keeping it at them.

Just because you are apparently getting away with three big meals a day and feeling no real disadvantage from the habit is not in the least an evidence that they are not harming you, and you certainly do not need that much food, no matter how hard you work.

A day always comes when the overworked stomach rebels, and the result of that rebellion is generally to put a man further back than he would have been had he even gone so far the other way as to undereat.

All you eat more than enough to keep your strength up to normal is causing overwork on the part of some of the organs of your body, and if you persist in the habit it will cause overwork on the part of all of them.

Are you going to be satisfied to do business and make fair money and accumulate diabetes, cirrhosis of the liver, a weakened heart; or are you going to cut down the fuel consumption to the minimum and avoid future troubles and an unnecessarily early death?

Half of the buyers with whom you come in contact are difficult to get on with just because they have not treated their stomachs right. If you treat yours

right you will have less trouble in handling people who treat theirs wrong.

If your stomach is interfering with your feeling good it is interfering with your selling goods. They say a man is as old as his arteries. Well, your arteries are as old as your stomach. Are your arteries hardening early? Then you are and have been overeating and underexercising. The clean-cut, clear-skinned, medium-weight fellows who live active lives, eating simple foods and avoiding such conditions as make necessary the constant use of laxatives and cathartics —these men are not troubled by premature old age in the form of hardened arteries or anything else. It is more than an accident that you find these men in the front rank of successful business, though it must be admitted that a good many of them drop out of this physical class when they reach the point where they feel it is not necessary to work hard any longer.

The good chauffeur is not the one who never looks at the engine as long as it will run, who spends all his time polishing the outside of the car without raising the hood. Neither is it he who never touches the outside of the car until he finds it necessary to take off the mud to see what is under it. It is the man who gives both the inside and the outside proper attention.

If you are going to use as much sense about yourself as the good chauffeur uses about his car you know what to do. Keep your stomach and your digestive tract working right, and keep your outside appearance, yourself and your clothes, looking right. If you are right outside and right inside, then you will have gone a long way toward making the right impression on your trade, and you will have the power to turn that impression to account.

CHAPTER XXIV

SELLING GOODS "AS IS"

IF YOU were running a shop where you turned out perfectly plain wood pulleys, and if you made them all alike, you would be able, as you grew more and more accustomed to the motions made in each part of the operation, to speed up the output until you reduced the lost time to a minimum.

If you were making castings all alike, of a certain design, from the same pattern, uniformity of output would enable you to develop perfection of product and speed of production at the same time.

If, however, in either of the above instances, every customer you secured wanted his pulleys or his castings a little different from every other, thus necessitating a change in the lathes or a change in the pattern every time a new order was begun, you can easily see what might happen to your profits. When one's product is standardized so that changes in patterns, in designs, in tools, in machinery, are unnecessary, then the profit percentage begins to go up the scale.

It is unnecessary to go any further than the Ford Motor Company for an obvious demonstration of what can be done when changes are avoided and uniformity is the rule.

You salesmen all know this. I am not telling you anything new when I tell you these facts. The trouble is that many salesmen forget it or decline to be influenced by it. It is perhaps not too much to say that a salesman who is not willing to govern his actions by the principle that uniformity of output makes an

ascending profit scale is a salesman who has not the good of the concern at heart.

In many cases salesmen's lack of appreciation of the desirability of avoiding special features in the production, finish, packing or shipment of the product is due to youth and inexperience. You seldom find the wise and experienced salesman willing to discuss anything but stock standards that call for no special expense.

It is important that the young salesman develop a state of mind that will take "As is" as its abiding principle. Mr. L. F. Hamilton, of the National Tube Company, says, "If the average salesman would take the policy of the house as it is, the line of goods 'as is,' the price 'as is,' the sales manager 'as is' (even with all his peculiarities), I have no doubt his accomplishments would be far greater."

It is a waste of time for the salesman representing a large organization to try to change the principles that have been established as wisest by the head of that organization after years of experience and experiment. I do not mean by this that the salesman should not feel free to make suggestions for improvement growing out of his experiences and observations among his customers. I mean that allowing one's self to develop a state of mind that makes it seem necessary all the time to give the trade concessions and individual advantages is the wrong tack to take.

Instead of trying to make over the product, or the way it is packed or shipped, whenever a large buyer threatens to buy elsewhere or holds any other big stick over your head, devote your energies to showing why the product is made, packed and shipped as it is, and why that way will produce the most sat-

isfaction in the end, even for the man who claims to want something different, but whose claim may be based on nothing more than a mere whim.

Just get the idea that certain policies of the house behind you, certain methods, certain peculiarities if you like, are as immutable as the laws of gravity and light.

The successful salesmen in your organization, the men at the head of the list in that kind of work, are those who have accepted conditions as laid down by the manufacturing and selling departments of the business. They have had their little say about what they thought good methods, or about possible improvements, but when they have said this they accept the decision of the heads of the departments as final. They make their suggestions for bettering product or methods to the house, not to the customers.

As far as your trade is concerned, stick your stakes right on the lines the product already follows.

It is an easy matter to show a customer that to finish his goods in a different way from the standard adopted is to add to the cost of filling his order, and in that way to give him the equivalent of a price concession. Yours is a one-price house. Make that fact plain. You give no single customer any advantage over any other.

When a man asks for something special, don't try to break it gently to him that he cannot have it. The more you beat about the bush, the more he feels that if he sticks to it he can get what he is asking for. And if you let a customer go so far as to say absolutely what he will or will not do, you have probably allowed him to go so far that from sheer pride or stubbornness he will refuse to change.

To the customer who asks for something special say right away: "No, we cannot do that. We do not make special stock for anybody at regular prices." Then you have placed yourself on record. He knows the worst at once and you have the rest of your time to spend in showing him why and how it is to his advantage to accept the goods as they are.

It is a good deal better to spend your time and energy showing a customer the advantage of your goods "as is" than to have to spend it in trying to keep him from finding out that you will not sell them in any other way. Don't mince matters. Go right to the worst and have it over with, and then devote your salesmanship to helping him to forget your refusal or your statement of your position.

Of course, there is sure to be now and then a salesman of the type who must go to one extreme or the other. Such a salesman will probably say right here: "Oh, all right, if you don't want me to discuss possible improvements with my trade, I won't do it." I don't mean anything like that. From the customers may come many of the best suggestions as to how a product may be made more satisfactory, what changes can be made that will help sales. These suggestions should be sought for, not avoided or refused. The point is that they should be secured in the form of suggestions, not in the form of stipulations. Don't let a customer get the idea into his head that changes in the product can be made to his order. Standardization and uniformity of your output are too important for that, and it is best that he should know it.

It is true there are some changes that may not cost much, but if the policy of the house is against these changes let your policy be against them. Even

in the case of special features which the house does not refuse to incorporate, if they are extras, or if they reduce the profits on the order, your influence ought to be against them.

In the case of so simple a matter as an item that comes packed in dozens and half-dozens and the customer is allowed to choose which way he will take the goods, let your influence be used to induce him to specify the cheaper form of packing.

Such things are little, but the salesman who looks after these little things is going to be the kind of salesman who will look after the bigger savings, and the little savings soon amount to large ones in the aggregate.

It handicaps the salesman and it handicaps the house if there is a constant tendency to suggest little changes in order to make it easier to handle some finicky customer. Better than fitting the policy of a big concern to the whims of an individual buyer is leading that buyer to see that the methods of the big concern are best as they are.

There is one thing I distinctly do not mean in referring to the "as is" state of mind. I do not mean that a salesman should allow his mind to get into a rut. Accept the policy or the output of the house as it is, in offering it to the trade, but don't accept it as a fact that no improvements can be made. Allow your mind to follow certain stated channels when considering the goods as you are offering them to customers, but in all other considerations of your own and the concern's methods keep out of the rut. Think along new lines; evolve new plans and new ideas, and when you are satisfied that you have thought up something worth while put it up to the management.

CHAPTER XXV

THE ELEMENT OF LUCK

THEY used to say, "It's better to be born lucky than rich." This may be true, because it certainly is a misfortune to be born rich and to miss all the big part of life by not having to work, by escaping all the experience that goes with accomplishing and all the satisfaction that comes with well-earned success.

It must be pretty nice to be rich and know that you have only yourself to thank for it, and to be able to appreciate the riches because you know what it cost to get them and what they are worth. I do not believe that anything a man can get out of having a ready-made, hand-me-down fortune wished upon him can take the place of the pleasure and satisfaction of being a self-made man.

The man who is born lucky and who gets the idea early that he is favored by the gods is getting ready for a big disappointment some day when he finds that all that talk about luck was founded on somebody's dream. To bring the matter right down to salesmanship, we have to admit that the fellow who expects to reach success by the dream-book route is going to miss his train at the first important junction.

If your folks have always told you you were lucky, and that you needn't worry, because you couldn't lose if you tried, you may have somebody to blame when you finally prove a failure, but there will be mighty little satisfaction in that fact.

Every now and then I meet a salesman who might

be posing as the living image of the little god Gloom. The corners of his mouth are down, his cigar is frazzled at the end, his hat is on crooked, and he seems more ready to sit on his sample case than to carry it. Before that man opens his mouth I know what he is going to say. He is all ready to tell me what hard luck he has been having.

Well, he probably knows what he is talking about. He has no doubt been having a hard time, and if he can lay it to luck, so much the better for his state of mind. But all the while he is telling me about his luck, I am thinking about his ambition, his determination, his courage—or his lack of them. If luck, to call it by his own name for it, has deserted him, it is but another way of saying that he has lost his grip, has given up trying hard.

Very likely his business was bad for a long period, partly due to the general condition of things and partly due to his own over-confidence or to a lessening of effort. He began to lose sales because he began to take it a little easy. Some other fellow hustled and got to a few of his regular customers ahead of him. He gave up trying too soon in the case of a good customer who always needed a little urging. Such things may have brought on what seemed to be hard luck, starting him on the down-grade.

There is no such thing as concrete "luck." There is always a reason, and it is a mistake to be trying to lay a loss of business to some mysterious thing that does not exist, but that we can saddle with the responsibility in the hope of letting ourselves down easy.

A salesman handling a device for the automatic regulation of a heating plant walked into the office

of a prospect with a small model of the device in his hand. The prospect looked up, saw what he had, and, without waiting for a word, said, "Well, I don't know whether I'll be glad or sorry, but I guess I'll have you put one in for me."

The salesman, with all his hope for luck, could not believe he was making a sale, and he looked around to see whether the man was talking to him or to someone else behind him.

That looked like a pretty lucky incident, but really there was no luck to it, and that salesman would be the first one to admit it. He had sold one of those devices to this prospect's son-in-law. It had been carefully installed and it had given good service. The salesman had followed it up to see that it was satisfactory, and he had not overrated it in the first place. He had made a satisfied customer, and that customer had made the second sale for him, all but closing it.

What we think is luck always has something behind it. It dates back to good salesmanship somewhere along the line.

There used to be another good old saying to the effect that everything comes to him who waits. Well, the man who is counting on luck to lift him out of the rut and make of him a shining success some day is the same man who gets the idea that if he only waits long enough everything he wants will come to him.

Success is not going to come your way just because you wait for it. Success has to be earned. You cannot leave it to luck to make sales for you while you wait. If there is any luck in waiting it is luck for the other fellow, for him who hustles while you are waiting.

Good luck seems to be a thing, usually, that the other fellow gets. We hear plenty of men say, "I never have any luck," and we hear them refer to the luck somebody else is having. As a matter of fact, what we call luck, good luck, is one of those things that looks best at a distance, just as farthest fields always look greenest. When we get close up to the thing, we find either that it was not luck at all, or that it was not as desirable as it looked at a distance.

For instance, you hear a fellow salesman telling somebody in the hotel lobby about a big order he got over in Milwaukee. From the story you might think the salesman just happened to stumble on the fact that there was a chance there to make such a sale. What does not appear is the fact that that salesman has a system for uncovering those unexpected big prospects, and he works that system thoroughly. No luck about it at all.

Or a wide-awake salesman drops into your best territory and sells one of your customers something you might have sold him but didn't. The other fellow studied up this man's problems, found out what troubles he was having, and then walked right up to his desk and showed him how to stop the trouble. Was that luck?

Perhaps you have been unable to sell a certain man your line because to use it he would have to make certain expensive changes. While you are accepting this condition as a permanent one, as something you cannot help, some other salesman, selling a competing line, sees in a trade paper an announcement of a new device that would make the prospect's necessary changes cost comparatively little. This

means that this prospect can afford to make the change, and that wide-awake, trade-paper-reading salesman makes haste to present the altered condition to the customer and gets the business while you are waiting for something to happen. It is not that your competitor was lucky, but that he was all the time studying the proposition, digging into it from different angles. If he could not line up a customer in one way he would line him up in another, but he never gave up to the waiting game. He never trusted to luck to put anything across for him.

Luck never did put over a big deal or a little deal. People who are interested in business deals are not watching to see which way the wheel will turn. They are turning the wheels themselves, and they are not the wheels of games of chance either.

Sometimes it seems like luck that brings it to pass that the salesman strikes the buyer just when he is in the buying mood, that causes one to catch the earlier train that makes the connection. It seems like ill luck that causes a train to lose enough time so that on arrival at the buyer's you meet another salesman walking off with the order. Well, we may perhaps concede that much to pure luck. We may admit that there is no apparent reason why the individual is responsible for a certain few failures or successes, but a salesman's success in his work is not a matter of one order gained by the miraculous interposition of Providence. It is not a question of unavoidable circumstances.

The man who lands one big order, a freak proposition, may thus make a bigger showing for that month than the chap who has kept plugging away with few failures, but in measuring up a man's suc-

cess or failure we consider the way he handles himself and his business opportunities week in and week out. It is the long run that tells the story.

In other words, if there is such a thing as luck in salesmanship, particularly good luck, it gets the salesman nothing in the long run, and he is to be congratulated if it does not spoil him by making him depend on its coming his way again.

And bad luck—well, if you have much bad luck, if it seems to keep coming your way month after month, make up your mind there is something that draws it in your direction. It will pay you to study into your manner, your methods, your system, your habits, your character.

They say, "Love goes where it is sent." I take that saying with a grain of salt. I believe that a decent young fellow can come pretty near to getting the girl he wants if he wants her badly enough and insistently enough. And it is the same way with luck. Luck does not go where it is sent. It goes to the fellows who go after it and stick to it and won't let go.

Oh, you hard-luck boys! I am sorry for you, but it is not because you have hard luck. It is because you do not know that it is your own fault; that you might have good luck if you only knew it and believed it and wanted it badly enough to get it.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE VALUE OF SYSTEM

MANY traveling salesmen seem to think that since their business takes them here, there and everywhere, and since they are not working at an office desk, system is something that does not apply to their case.

They look at business system as something having to do with filing cabinets, card indexes and the like. They reason that their work is mostly either talk, which is the concerted action of the brain and the jaw, or packing and unpacking samples, which is mere routine labor.

Well, the salesman is generally right, but this time he is wrong. System certainly has its application to his line of work as well as to that done back in the office. He should not be satisfied merely to be the object of the sales manager's systems; he should have systems of his own applied to his work.

There can be no question in any salesman's mind as to the value of orderliness, and system is primarily order. We all admit that disorder is an enemy to success, that it means loss of time and energy and is often productive of discouragement. If mere order can save us something along such lines, surely system, which is a more scientific orderliness, will go farther and help us in more ways than by merely saving confusion.

The beginning of system for anybody is to get into that attitude of mind which renders disorder distasteful and unpleasant. Unless you develop a dis-

like for lack of system, you cannot expect easily to become enthusiastic over encouraging it.

What may system mean for a traveling man? For one thing, it should mean, as far as possible, a regular time for work. This is not nearly as impossible as one might think. For example, the best time for writing the house is right after dinner at night, or supper if you get it in a small town. Whether on the train or in a hotel, this time is practically always available for writing in about the day's work and what it has uncovered, whether there are orders to go in or not.

If a man is careless and puts off writing until later, the procrastination increases the number of times when the letter will not get written, and one never knows when such a delay, or any delay, may prove expensive.

If the after-dinner cigar has to precede the letter, one more chance of the letter being omitted. If there has to be a walk around town, or if the writing is put off till after the show, so much the less likelihood of the letter being written, and so much the more certainty of its being of less value when it is written.

The letter that is to represent the best thought of the man behind it—and any letter worth writing should do that—will be the letter that is written when that man's mind is least distracted, when the facts of the case are freshest. The longer you put off writing a letter, the less value it will be. Some things will be forgotten later that you would think of now. Ten minutes does not seem long, but if that ten minutes is the ten in which a certain important thought gets away from you it may cost you more

than some whole days. It does not pay to trifle with ten-minute postponements just because they are short.

The traveling salesman usually depends upon his memory for a knowledge of the peculiarities and individual needs of his various prospects. This buyer will never allow a traveling man to get his ear until after eleven in the forenoon. That buyer is offended by tobacco smoke. Another warms up better for being allowed to tell a story or two about his small son.

In the days when a salesman took his time and had no more customers than he could know personally and intimately it was all right to depend upon his memory for the details about each case. But this is a time of countless customers and possible customers. It is a time of many new prospects and of rushing from one to another without any opportunity to sit down and think over a man's life history before approaching him. If you are to take advantage of what you have found out about a man to whom you want to sell you must have the information systematized. The man must be catalogued, and you must have a card index of your own, or something equivalent. This is not mere theory; it is the practical application of system.

System has its application to all lines of work and to all that a salesman does. It is important in the bigger things because its lack is followed by resultant important loss or failure. It is important in the little things because all the big things swing on hinges that are comparatively insignificant in size. The biggest deals swing on little hinges, and those little hinges will get rusty and squeaky and broken unless they are kept lubricated with the oil of system.

It is system that makes a business run smoothly, and it is lack of it that soon throws everything at odds. System carries a program right through, from the approach to the buyer on to the explanation of the line, the demonstration of its value, and to the name on the dotted line. There are no hitches. Everything moves smoothly, and the thing wanted is at hand when it is wanted. The argument which proves the need of the article and the demonstration of its value are not ended, leaving the buyer in mid-air, while there is a five-minutes' hunt for an order-blank or for a price, during which five minutes the customer revolves in his mind certain reasons for not buying that he had figured out before and forgotten under the influence of your selling talk.

Buyers are usually men of high-class business methods. The better they are worth selling, the greater their regard for good methods and systems. If you expect to gain the respect of a high-class business man, you cannot expect to follow low-class business methods yourself in doing it. If you have no systematic plans, if you follow no definite line of attack, you will be regarded as a dub, and your line must suffer in consequence.

The systematic buyer who is approached by a salesman who has neither beginning nor middle, neither climax nor ending to his selling talk, cannot but regard that salesman and his house unfavorably. When you do not get anywhere it looks as if you do not know what you are talking about, and logically it is not far to go to the conclusion that perhaps there is not a whole lot to be said for your line anyway.

The hit-or-miss salesman is generally going to miss because he is not aiming at anything in particular.

He has no systematic method of going after what he wants. He wanders, and the buyer loses patience with him.

Bear in mind that when you lack system you are trying to make others pay for that lack by giving you more time than you are entitled to take. They will not do it. They will spot you at the start as incompetent, and they will spend the time you are with them in figuring how to get rid of you, not in considering how they might use your goods.

System is the thing behind the proper method of doing anything, whether it be selling, manufacturing or consuming. If you develop systematic methods you will find you do twice as much in less time and do it better. If you lack system you will be wondering all the time why it is that things never come your way, why the other fellows have all the luck. You need system in your salesmanship.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SALESMAN AND THE TIME TABLE

WE HAVE heard a good deal about the workman who watches the clock. He is the man who comes in in the morning, hangs up his hat and sits down to wait for the hour to strike before beginning to work. He keeps one eye on the clock all the forenoon to see how much longer it will be until noon. The comic supplements have given their share of space to jokes about the workman who stops work so quickly when the whistle blows that he leaves his tools in the air and does not even finish the hammer stroke he has started.

There is no denying there are plenty of these clock-watching employees. They are always employees, because a man who makes it his practice to watch the clock never gets to the point where he can himself become an employer. He is destined to remain in the workman class all his days. Watching a clock ruins a man's eyes as far as seeing opportunities to grow bigger is concerned. It is remarkable how the face of a clock will shut out the view of the rest of the business world from a man's vision.

In salesmanship on the road a man does not work by the clock. He cannot start in to work when the whistle blows and quit at quitting time by union schedule. He works with more relation to train service than to eight hours a day. And there are such things as salesmen who allow train schedules to be their masters, just as the clock is the master of some workmen. Why, I have known salesmen to

pass up the chance for an order just to make a certain train, and once in a while a salesman will even go by a customer he knows has a small order for him, making sure of his train and trusting to luck to get some of the order the next time.

There are times when it may be necessary for a man to make a certain train at the expense of possible business. We may admit this because there are exceptions to all rules, and there is no doubt an exception to the rule that the first business to get is that right at hand. But it requires judgment to know when to allow the exception to take preference and when to follow the rule.

The man who thinks he must make a certain train because he has planned to make it needs to stop and think whether there is any other reason for getting it. It is natural, when we have made a plan, to think it must be carried out, and the longer we keep our mind set on its execution the more convinced we are that everything else must give way to it.

The schedule of a traveling salesman has a reason for its existence. It is planned with a definite object in view. He is expected to cover a certain territory in a certain time. But he is out for business, and it is worth considering seriously whether it will pay to pass a good chance here for a possible good chance somewhere further on; whether it is good salesmanship to let a small order here go by because there is a chance thereby to land another order in its place.

When a man outlines his schedule he should give it careful thought. The man who makes a schedule solely on a basis of time tables, trusting to good fortune to enable him to get the business in the allotted time, may find his schedule all shot to pieces inside

of a week because of unexpected opportunities for business. And the man who insists upon adhering to a prearranged schedule, regardless of opportunities, may find his business all shot to pieces in the same time.

Have a schedule, of course, but don't give it the blind adherence of a man who cannot lay down any rules for himself, but must stick to the book of instructions, no matter what comes up. Learn to *think!* When more business can be got out of a city by staying longer, forget the schedule and get the business—unless the schedule is more important than the business.

A salesman should follow the line of the most business rather than the line of the least resistance. A schedule is made out with a view to developing the greatest business returns. The schedule is made for the business and for the salesman. When the movements of the salesman and the operations of the business are made to conform to the peculiarities of the schedule the system is working backward.

A few hours saved at the end of the week by getting home, or getting to a certain town earlier because the salesman had his plans made for a little outing there, might not interfere with the week's work being done properly and with careful attention to every opportunity, but again it might. When it is necessary to leave town on Monday or Tuesday on a certain train in order to keep to the schedule which is to save time on Saturday, the neglect of business on Monday or Tuesday is just as much a neglect of business for that Saturday outing as if the opportunity were passed by the last thing on Saturday.

You cannot neglect a customer entirely and hold

his trade. You cannot neglect him partly and hold it. You cannot neglect him at all without suffering a loss of some of his business eventually. He may get along without buying from you this trip, and never miss you till you come again, when he realizes it has been a long time since you were around. The customer who does not like to bother with traveling men will none the less notice it when he is neglected.

A customer may not care that you have missed him. He may even be glad because it resulted in his investigating some other line of supplies than your own. The buyer is the last man who worries because the salesman does not call upon him, though he is the first man adversely affected.

When your trips as a salesman begin to be irregular the reputation of the house begins to suffer. It looks to buyers as if business must be off a little, as if you were not holding your own in that territory and were slighting it on that account. As a matter of fact the buyer is apt to be right about this, because you will not slight territory and you will not neglect customers when there is business there that you are sure you can get. The house is foolish to insist on a rigid adherence to schedule, just as an employer would be foolish to insist that every workman must drop his tools and run when the whistle blows.

Any salesman who is compelled to follow absolutely a set of rules regarding train schedule or anything else will to that extent become a machine salesman. Superior salesmanship is developed by encouraging the use of the salesman's individuality. Of course there are a good many men on the road selling goods, just as there are a good many men in the shops, who do their best work under a set of rules

from which they are not allowed to deviate. But those men are not the kind of men we aim to become or the kind of men we engage in our service. They are machine-like men, running in a groove. They cannot be depended upon to use their own judgment to good effect, because apparently they lack judgment and need to have someone furnish that lack for them.

There are two methods to pursue when one has men of this machine quality in his employ. One is to give them a little rope from time to time, allowing them to feel their way into a more independent attitude; the other is never to give them any rope, leaving them to become plodders, settling into the groove to stay there till they die.

The man who runs on a schedule cannot avoid the tendency to run in a groove. His route is laid out with a time for everything. He does not have to think. He does not look for opportunities because he does not have to. His opportunities are all cut and dried and laid out for him before he starts. "You will see Brown in Brownsville, Jones in Jonesville, Green in Greenville and White at White Junction," he is told. He must "make" certain towns each day and be at a stated point by Saturday night. This is the official schedule. His own plan to beat it a little because he knows a girl somewhere on the line, where he wants to stay a little longer, cuts further into his desire for opportunities.

It is human nature to think that if we do all we are asked to do, all we are expected to do, we are doing pretty well. We may be earning our money if we do that much. We may in that way be able to hold our jobs as long as we maintain that degree of efficiency. But we will never get very far ahead. It is

not all of success to hold the job we have and do merely what we are paid to do.

Success, the kind of success we ought to strive for, means doing more and more, growing bigger and bigger, developing until we outgrow the present position and its opportunities. We cannot do this and stick strictly to a schedule. We cannot even hold the business we have and at the same time be slaves of the time table. The buyer from whom we are anxious to extract an order and get away in a hurry knows of our haste without being told. He knows of it in spite of our efforts to appear at ease with abundant time. We cannot hurry a buyer without his being aware of it, and we cannot *feel* in a hurry without acting in a hurry.

Orders secured in a hurry are small orders, smaller at least than they ought to be or would be if given proper time and attention. A schedule is a good thing. We need one to help us get through the week without confusion of dates and irregularity of movement, but along with the schedule we need to have good judgment, and we must use this judgment in changing a train here or there for an earlier or a later one.

We must feel at liberty to stay another day in a town if there is business in sight, to be obtained by that means, and we must be ready to leave half a day sooner if it seems desirable, or if we get through unexpectedly. Above all we must have enough good sense to know when it is the best business to go and when it will prove worth while to stay.

The man who has not enough judgment to know when to change his schedule, when to stay longer or to go sooner, needs to train his brain to a higher

degree of efficiency. The man who cannot or will not train his brain in that way might as well seek an occupation with less need for brains.

CHAPTER XXVIII

GETTING IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

ALMOST anyone can do a thing right after trying enough times. The man to achieve distinct success is he who gets it right the first time.

Practically every sales manager has men on his staff upon whom he can count for a definite percentage of mistakes, particularly in operations they are performing for the first time.

There is no credit attached to doing a thing right after it has been done so many times as to become a routine affair, something that can be done with the eyes shut. We cannot compliment a salesman upon his having addressed his envelopes to the house correctly, because doing that is something he could not easily do incorrectly.

The men who are expected to make mistakes seldom disappoint their manager. Mistake-making seems to be a habit with them. They not only form the habit of making one particular mistake, of doing a certain thing wrong almost every time, but they form the habit of making mistakes in general.

Mistake-making is very largely a matter of habit. It is a habit of carelessness, and the more frequently one is careless, the more frequently he is going to be careless. It is like taking a drink. After taking one it is a good deal easier to take another, and the more you take, the less you care how many you take.

Men do not make mistakes because it is easier to do the thing the wrong way. Usually it is no easier. They make them because at the moment they are not

thinking about whether they are doing it right or wrong. Carelessness is thoughtlessness. It is merely going ahead and doing the act of the moment without giving it attention, doing it absent-mindedly.

Of course there are many mistakes that are errors of judgment. A man may be careful and yet lack good judgment. That is to say, he may be lacking in ordinary common sense and the ability to use it. And then, too, instances will occur where a man doing the very best he knows, using his judgment to the best advantage, will make mistakes. In other words, some few mistakes are really excusable. But most of them are not, and it is a weak-minded chap who seeks to excuse his frequent errors on the ground that they were caused by influences beyond his control. Why, I have known men who really seemed to believe they were in the hands of a sort of fate that made it impossible for them to avoid mistakes. As a matter of fact, all they needed to do to overcome this so-called fate was to *try* to get things right.

If a man does not even try to get things right, there is nothing at all to prevent him from getting them wrong. There are scores of wrong ways to one right way, and the man who leaves it to chance to get him on the right road has the preponderance of numbers against him.

Since sales managers are human and realize the opportunities for making mistakes, they are ordinarily willing, perhaps too willing, to excuse a percentage of errors. Certainly it is not improper to be lenient to a reasonable extent. A man may even be excusable in many instances for getting a thing wrong the first time, for making a mistake once. It is when he makes the same mistake over again, and

perhaps again and again, that he shows his lack of ability.

Salesmen of a sort do make mistakes of the same kind repeatedly, and, strange to say, they are excused over and over again when they ought to be reprimanded. This is because some sales managers are too tender-hearted, too human for the good of their force. Just as long as a sales manager allows and excuses mistakes in his men, just so long will many of them continue to make them.

You and I will go right on making mistakes when there is no incentive to avoid them. If we think it is going to make no difference, we are very likely not to try half as hard. I believe the salesman ought to be interested in his own development and advancement and improvement so that he will prefer to work under the direction of a manager who will try to cure him of his mistake-making propensity, rather than under an easy boss with whom everything goes.

The easy boss may be a happy-go-lucky favorite with his men, but he will not get the results he ought to get from them, and he will not get the admiration and respect he wants from them.

We all know it when we are working for someone we can impose upon, and, while we take advantage of the situation, we cannot admire the man who makes it possible.

Every man who has bought goods from traveling salesmen knows the man who never gets your name right. He does not listen attentively or intently enough when you give him the name, or he reads it carelessly, and when he has to use it he uses it wrong. He calls Mr. Parker Mr. "Harper"; he calls Mr. Harrington Mr. "Carrington"; he calls Mr. Hewitt

Mr. "Jewett," and so on down the line. No man considers it a compliment to have his name called wrong. Most men bridle a little when it happens.

But the mistake of a name would not be so important if it did not include getting the name wrong on the shipment of goods. These salesmen who get names wrong sometimes get town and city names wrong, and that involves wrong shipments. Having lived and done business in a town called Delhi, with another place called Delphi, in the same State, I know what it is to have salesmen careless of the town name. Some such mistakes were no doubt due to clerical errors, but enough times it happened that the salesman, the man who actually bought a ticket to Delhi and came to Delhi, and perhaps received mail at Delhi, wrote the name Delphi in his order book.

I don't know that these men ever made the same mistake the second time. If they did, it was not my fault, but they did make it once, and therein lies the lesson that it is most important for the salesman to get things right the first time.

The little lack of attention, of concentration, at the moment when the important parts of the selling transaction are taking place, is what makes it possible to get something wrong.

Inaccuracy can be cured only by taking pains. One writer has said that taking pains is but another name for genius. With genius so simple a thing, why fall short of it? Any man can take pains with his work.

If you will take pains you can become efficient. To be accurate and to take the least possible time in being right is to be highly efficient. Accuracy, efficiency, when acquired to the degree of a habit, will

result in the best return for your labor, return in the way of profit to your employer and salary to yourself.

If there is anything in the salesman's characteristics that will produce economy in the handling of the business he develops it is accuracy. It prevents misstatements about the goods that will later develop into demands for adjustment. It prevents customers being disappointed by expecting better values than they get. It prevents mistakes regarding the amounts of sales. It prevents useless transportation charges. It does away with refusals of shipments. It eliminates the guesswork.

The man who thinks about what he is doing, who gives his entire attention always to the act of the moment, does not have to apologize for his mistakes. He gets things right the first time every time.

The salesman who gets things right wherever he goes has no dread of going back over his tracks. The salesman who is always making mistakes has a few places where he dreads to call each trip. When there are places where a man does not want to call, he is pretty sure to miss some of them on a much slighter excuse than would suffice if everything were all right. Quite naturally a man sells no goods to the buyers upon whom he does not call.

When a salesman finds himself making mistakes because of a poor memory it is time for him to stop trying to carry important data under his hat. Items that are set down immediately are not forgotten, and unless the man's brain is in a very bad way they are not set down wrong.

If a salesman finds himself making frequent mistakes and wonders why it is, he may perhaps find a solution in the fact that he tries to carry on an inde-

pendent conversation while taking down his order. Perhaps he thinks that by keeping the buyer's mind partly occupied with other matters he may get a bigger order. This may be good psychology—though I never heard anyone say so—but if it results in sending a man a lot of stuff he did not order, or wrong items or quantities, it is certainly poor business and will result in loss of trade.

Careful attention to the matter in hand is the only thing that is certain to eliminate mistakes.

I said that the sales manager expects a certain number of mistakes, particularly in first performances of a duty. Instead of this being a reason why a salesman may take a few chances and rest easy over such mistakes as it seems natural for him to make, it is the best kind of a reason why he should see if he cannot establish himself as a better-than-average man by getting things right the first time.

There is no reputation to be gained by doing things as well as the average. If you cannot do better than the average you will be rated as ordinary, paid as ordinary, and ordinary you will remain.

The time to begin to try to be better than the average is not after you learn the ropes, not after you have found your way around, not after you have become better acquainted with your line, but right at the outset. Don't postpone the time for improvement.

The man who gets it right the first time does not have to apologize for mistakes. He gets in right with his boss and he makes satisfied customers.

The man who gets it right the first time does not have it to do over again, and he thereby saves himself endless trouble.

If all the useless labor in the world, caused by having to do over again the things done wrong at first, could be eliminated, one of the greatest sources of waste would disappear. Not only would time be saved, but material, and in the end, of course, money.

Accuracy is a habit that can be formed by any man who cares to take the trouble to form it. It will not come to the man who does not try for it. Merely getting to be a better seller of goods is not going to make you more accurate.

Resolve that hereafter you will get your work right the first time, and then there will not have to be a second time. You will become a high-class salesman and in no great length of time will be able to look down from an elevated position on the fellows who persist in struggling along below, doing things wrong and doing them over.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE VALUE OF PUSH

IN YOUR travels around the country you must have been struck with the number of business men you have met who seemed to confine their fight against competition very largely to mere complaining and kicking.

Such salesmen and dealers talk a good deal about hard times and high prices and scarcity of materials, and they are quick to lay a lack of orders to such things as luck or poor train service or obstinacy on the part of buyers.

Whether the kicks and complaints and laments of these men are justified or not does not signify. The big fact is that whining, complaining, kicking against the pricks, have not the slightest influence in bettering things, and they are a fruitless waste of time—time that ought to be spent in hustling for orders.

When I run across a salesman who does nothing about getting ahead of his competitors but complain, I am reminded that Elbert Hubbard once said something to the effect that most business men who are looking for sympathy would be helped more by a good, swift kick.

All the world quits a quitter. If you quit, your business will quit. When a man sits down and complains about the trade he is losing to some competitor he might just as well bid good-by to that trade forever, because trade stays with you only when you hold onto it, and it comes back to you only when you go after it and grab it.

Positive action in the right direction is necessary if you are going to sell goods. The more push you put behind the action, the farther it will go and the more it will accomplish.

One reason why so many salesmen remain little salesmen is that they make no real, live effort to become anything more. They are satisfied to let well enough alone. They lack the essential push.

It is not enough to wish for business and to go through the usual motions made by a salesman. Any real development of trade is going to come from special effort rather than from routine work. It is the extra effort you put into your business that makes it grow.

Some men have none of that quality the boys call "pep." They are without energy or ambition. Others have enough "pep," but direct their efforts in profitless ways. They use up their surplus endeavor in outside affairs. They get to the top in the lodge, or they acquire reputations for being great mixers, darned good fellows, successful fun-makers, and so on; but all this does not make business success. If you are going to be anything more than a little piker of a salesman you will have to get busy and put the push where it belongs, right behind your selling.

There is nothing about any form of competition that has any miraculous power over the trade. There are no mysteries in selling. Other salesmen who seem to be so remarkably successful merely use the same means that are open to you. I have seen salesmen who seemed to be afraid of their competitors. They would get something like an attack of "buck fever" when they came up against a hot competitive proposition.

Don't let anything like that happen to you. Keep your self-control. Don't be afraid of anything. Don't be afraid that your prices are too high or that your terms are not favorable enough, or that somebody else has made a proposition you cannot meet. Just make up your mind that nobody has anything better to offer than you have and that you can handle the business as well as any salesman who ever lived.

You want your self-confidence at the front. You want to feel and act as if you knew that no one could quite give the value you could. Push right ahead without stopping every few minutes to see who is coming.

The successful salesman is going to be he who has the courage to go ahead along an uncharted route, taking a new direction when there seems to be something to be gained that way. The man who is satisfied to stay in the rut never gets any more than his share of the business that is divided up among all the other salesmen. If you haven't the energy to push yourself out of the rut you will never grab off any big orders.

Don't grow faint-hearted when you learn of some one else cutting a price away below reason. There will always be houses with the idea that the way to get the trade is by cutting the profit off the price. Just remember that the other fellow cannot do business without a profit any more than you could, and when he cuts off profits in one place he must replace them elsewhere or take a loss, and taking too many losses means ultimate failure. While you are looking for low spots in competitors' price lists just watch for the high spots too.

Push all the time, but watch for the times when competitors let up on their pushing or stop altogether, and at such times force a big wedge into the lines of their trade. Keep up your own end when the other fellows are working hard for the business and bear on when they let up, instead of letting up to match them.

Some salesmen push less when business is easy to get because they are easily satisfied. Some push less when business is dull because they think there is no use trying then. Both classes are wrong. You want to push hard, when business is easy to get, to get more; when it is hard to get, to get your share.

Extra pressure on customers, if wisely used, will produce extra sales. It is not good business to push customers into buying against their better judgment or beyond their actual needs, even if you can do it. Your push should be used to make them *want to buy*.

Push will make it possible for you to sell larger quantities instead of taking what the buyer may see fit to hand you. It will send you after the buyers who are hard to reach, and it will help you to put it over with these buyers.

Don't be satisfied with a customer buying just what he wants right now. Encourage him to order for future delivery. Look ahead to the needs of the future in every man's business. You may thus be able to help him to forestall a shortage he had not thought about.

Lack of push has been the cause of the downfall of more than one concern. Not always is it lack of push on the part of the salesman, either. Sometimes men higher up lack push. They may have had enough

of it to get well toward the top of the ladder, only to cease pushing then.

When we see a competing house go ahead of us we sometimes wonder how they do it. There is no trick about it. It is push. The other house, somewhere in its organization, has more push than we have. There is no good reason why it should have. There may be no better brains behind it, no better quality of output, no better condition of its force, no better feeling among the departments. But there is that something that puts its forces all in motion.

CHAPTER XXX

THE DEAD CENTER

WHEN a man reaches a point where he is satisfied with what he has done and is doing, then he is in danger of stopping on the dead center. It is, no doubt, a good thing to be contented, but when contentment means the absence of ambition to go further and do more and better work, then it becomes too much of a good thing.

Most of us need a spur at times to start us up when we lag, to kick us past the dead center where, unless we realize our danger, we are likely to stop short. We are all in need of the spur of some kind of criticism to keep us at our work, to keep us pushing on, to keep us from relaxing until we have not enough momentum to carry us past that first dead center.

There is a type of salesman who goes around with a chip on his shoulder. He resents any form of criticism of what he does. He allows that he knows more about his territory, about what his customers want and will buy, than anyone else can know. He thinks the sales manager does not appreciate his position.

Some of these chip-on-their-shoulder men say that the sales manager doesn't seem to have anything to do but sit there in his office and think up extra stunts for them, and write them letters telling them how much they ought to be selling.

Well, the man with a chip on his shoulder makes his own path a good deal harder than it need be, and he is himself the worst stumbling-block in his road

to success. If he cannot accept criticism of his work from one who is competent and authorized to criticize, he may depend upon it that he is standing still and that the days of his greatest usefulness have passed. It is only a little while longer until he will be laid on the shelf.

They say the man on the side lines is the man who sees most of the game. The sales manager, from his vantage point, where he can view the men and their work and their field and its possibilities, in an unbiased and detached way, is in a position to judge better what the force can do and ought to be doing than the salesmen themselves.

We who are on the selling job are too close to see it as a whole. We know what is doing at the point where we are in direct contact with affairs, but we have too narrow a horizon to get an effectual look at the whole field.

The sales manager, seeing the whole situation, receiving reports from all parts of the field of action, knowing what others are doing under circumstances similar to our own, is in a position to offer just and intelligent criticism of our work.

Sometimes we are doing so well that we think nobody has any right to say a word about what might be done. We reach the point where we think we are selling a lot of goods, more than the territory ever took before, and therefore we are to be complimented and patted on the back.

We forget that at times there are sections of our field where the demand is so far above the normal that, while selling more goods than we ever did before, we may yet be falling far short of what we ought to be doing. If we cannot listen with patience

to suggestions that our opportunities are greater, and that therefore our sales should be increasing faster than they are, we are in danger of stalling on the dead center.

Criticism, in so far as it consists of advice and suggestions from sales manager to salesman, is constructive and should be helpful and acceptable. The manager wants us to sell more goods. We want to sell more. We are a unit that far. Then let us take what he has to say in the way of criticism and comment upon our methods, upon our opportunities, as friendly suggestions for our advantage.

There are men in business who must figure everything out for themselves, men who think their own way is the only way, who will not listen to advice or suggestions from anyone. You find these men running little stagnant stores or factories, with cobwebs on the equipment and help working half-time, the whole outfit, obviously, awaiting the arrival of the sheriff with a sale notice to put on the door.

These men have not themselves the knowledge or the ambition to develop enough momentum to carry them past the dead centers of their business life, and they will not accept any help because they resent anything they can construe into an implication that they do not know it all.

We scarcely expect traveling salesmen to adopt this old-fashioned attitude. We expect a man who is out to sell goods to the business men of the country to have the modern idea—the desire to help wherever it is to be found. Such a man welcomes criticism because it shows him the weak points he himself would not discover.

Sometimes, if we get honest criticism, we find that

where we have thought the most of ourselves we are really weakest. This is rather logical, too, because we are least likely to look for weakness at the point where we thought there was no danger of it. It is natural to resent criticism of what we feel are our strongest points, but if we are wise we will consider pretty carefully whether or not we do not deserve it after all.

A salesman who was covering a live, growing manufacturing town on a certain line of supplies thought he was making a great record in that town. He was selling more goods there than any of his predecessors had hoped to sell. He was getting a fat order every trip from every one of his customers there. Hence, when he received a letter from the house suggesting that this town ought to be giving them more business, he flared up and sat down in the hotel writing-room and wrote a letter to the sales manager in which he expressed his feelings pretty freely. As he sat there reading over the letter with considerable satisfaction at its pungency, he overheard two men talking near him. One of them, evidently the salesman for a line similar to that of our friend, was remarking on the phenomenal growth of his sales in that town!

With that letter in his hands, the disgruntled salesman began to think. Perhaps there was something in the sales manager's suggestion. Obviously there was somewhere in that town a lot of business he was not getting.

To make the story short, he tore up the letter and stayed over a day and investigated. He found several new business houses using his kind of goods. He found several old-fashioned plants, formerly

engaged only in work along other lines, now changed and using his kind of stuff. He found that he had been missing a pretty big bet and he inwardly thanked the sales manager for criticising him, and even wondered why he had let him off so easily.

When adverse criticism gives place to favorable criticism, which we usually refer to as praise, we never complain. We like it. We think we are strong for honesty, and yet we would rather have praise we do not deserve than adverse criticism we do deserve. If that is true, it means that we are more anxious to hear pleasant fiction than unpleasant, but useful, fact.

Praise does have its value at the proper time as an incentive, and if we have done well we are entitled to be told so and thus encouraged to do still better. Praise is good until we come to live for it. When we value it too highly we become all the more difficult to help by criticism.

As a rule the man who is satisfied with himself is satisfied with mighty little. To become self-satisfied is to stop with mediocrity rather than to rise to the top. I sometimes think a man might better be a pronounced failure than a mere colorless mediocrity.

The man who stops on the dead center may be able to stay where he is; he may be able to hold his own; but if the others keep on going ahead he will soon find that holding his own is not enough to keep him up with the procession.

We all need some kind of a spur to stimulate us to greater action, to make us want to do better. If we are possessed of great ambition, that will help, but we really need the criticism of others who know more about it than we do. Honest, intelligent criticism will be of more assistance to us than an increase in

salary or any number of compliments and bouquets.

The secret of getting by the dead center is to keep up the momentum, to keep going. Every time we let up on our effort and allow our business machine to slow down, we lose a large portion of the effort necessary to get up speed again, and we lose the power we would be getting from a full head of steam.

If we can get help from outside in keeping up our ambition, if we can gather help in directing our energy aright by securing the intelligent criticism of others who know more than we about all or about some phase of our work, we will be the better able to make all work produce the greatest possible results.

Let us take criticism the way it is intended, as a help, and thus get out of it all we can. We can afford to pay no attention to criticism which comes from the outside, from unauthorized, unintelligent sources, perhaps, but the criticism of those interested in seeing us make good should be utilized to help us get past our dead centers.

CHAPTER XXXI

"IT CAN'T BE DONE"

SOME of the things laid down for the salesman to do seem very difficult to him. If he is one to be easily discouraged he will think they are impossible. It needs only a little lack of energy to cause a salesman to regard the difficult as the impossible.

To the man with no energy it may perhaps be admitted that many things actually are impossible. In other words, his physical capabilities are measured by his mental attitude. If we think a thing is impossible it lacks only a little to become impossible.

In conversation a while ago with a traveling salesman who was on his way to my home town I asked him upon whom he called there. He named two men who were his regular customers. I asked him why he did not call on a third man who, I knew, bought more of the salesman's kind of goods than both his customers put together.

"You can't sell him anything," the salesman replied. 'I know plenty of men who have tried it. I called there three or four times myself when I first took this territory. I couldn't start anything. It can't be done."

"How does he get his goods?" I asked. "He can't steal them. He must buy them somewhere."

"Oh, yes, I suppose he does buy them, but he has some favorite house he patronizes and nobody else can break in."

Not long after I was in the office of this man who

was regarded as a hard man to sell. A traveling man's card came in. The man looked at it and said to the boy who brought in the card: "I guess I will have to see this man. He represents a good house and he seems to have the courage of his convictions. Tell him I will see him in fifteen minutes.

"I have calls from an almost endless number of salesmen in my line," he remarked to me in an explanatory way, "and if I were to give up time to all of them I would have none left for the management of my business. When I get a little further along I will have a buyer, but at present I am the buyer and I have no time to waste. When a strange salesman comes along I don't see him. I have been getting along all right without his house, and not once in a hundred times do I really need his services. I know that if the house he represents is worth my while, and if the salesman is a man with whom I want to do business, he will continue to call until I do see him. And I know, too, that by refusing to see a man the first few times he calls, if he is a cheap man, I will eliminate him from the list and will never have to waste any time on him."

Isn't there a lesson in that? The reason why my train acquaintance had never got to this manufacturer was simply that he had given up too soon. He had decided the man was inaccessible. He stopped trying to sell him because he thought it couldn't be done.

The salesman who continues to call, regardless of whether he makes a sale or not, is going to become acquainted with the place and with somebody there. He is going to become known to the buyer or to whomsoever he tries to see, whether he sees him or

not. Persistently continuing to call means that some day the selling chance will come.

Another lesson seems to be available from what that buyer said to me. He said that not once in a hundred times did he really need the services of the salesman who got in to see him. That means one of two things: either the salesman had something to sell that was really not needed by the buyer, or he failed to show him how it was desirable for him to have it. In the first case, the exceptional case I think, nothing could be done, but in the other case, which means in the majority of instances, the salesman has nobody to blame but himself.

The first thing you have to do is to master your selling proposition, so to familiarize yourself with your line that you will be able to show any possible prospect how it will be of value to him. It is a feeble thing for a salesman to take the "it-can't-be-done" attitude regarding selling any man because of not knowing his line well enough to be able to show that man how he can use it to advantage.

The wall of inaccessibility which some buyers erect around themselves can be broken down by the man who persists in hammering away at it trip after trip. The man who refuses to admit that you have a good proposition for him will have to admit he is wrong if you keep showing him time after time, in one way or another, that it will pay him to try out your product.

On the other hand, can you expect to gain the patronage of a prospective customer if you go after him with your mind made up that it can't be done?

You can tell an "it-can't-be-done" salesman almost as far as you can see him. His whole appearance is

one of lack of ambition and energy. Just the appearance which goes with that type of man is enough to make it unlikely that he will be successful in any but the easiest selling problems.

On the contrary, look at the man who has the reverse attitude—"It can be done and I am going to do it." You know him too when you see him. He does not spend his time on trains slumped down in a corner of the smoker, listening to idle talk or smoking himself into stupidity. He makes all his time count. In his spare moments, aside from those he needs for rest or recreation, he studies his product, his field, his trade paper, or he otherwise occupies himself in increasing his efficiency.

This type of man has an alert air, an energetic step, a clean-cut appearance. He is recognized by the manager, by the buyer, or even by the office boy, as somebody who is entitled to attention. When a salesman shows by his appearance that he is a high-class man, that he is somebody, he is going to be treated accordingly.

The man who habitually says, "It can't be done," is the type of man said to have wishbone in the place of backbone. He spends his valuable time in wishing it could be done instead of in doing it. His idea of a thing that cannot be done is a thing that is hard to do. The difficult looks impossible to him. The trouble is that as he looks over the difficult proposition he looks for the difficult features in it, and, of course, the more he looks, the more of them he sees. The man who takes the other position looks for the easy side, and as a result he sees that the most difficult proposition is made up merely of small difficulties not one of which is in itself insuperable.

I have a certain amount of sympathy for the "it-can't-be-done" man. Whatever his original ambitions may have been, he has lost them. He has really come to believe these things cannot be done. Just as the man who believes he can do anything sticks to the belief until he proves it, so the man who thinks he cannot do a thing comes to believe that he is right.

"It can't be done" is merely another way of saying, "I won't even try." You never see a man who claims it can't be done putting any energy into trying to do it. He has admitted that his effort is going to be a failure and thus has decided the matter in advance. It is a plain case of inability to shoot any higher than you aim. A salesman does not develop the feeling that he cannot sell certain customers unless he lacks something in the way of personal courage and aggressiveness. A man's attitude toward his selling work is his attitude toward life in general.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE ART OF SELLING YOURSELF

OF COURSE the salesman must be able to sell goods. To his employer that is the thing of greatest importance.

But more important than that, to the salesman, is his ability to sell himself, to sell his services to an employer. Just as a salesman can always get rid of goods enough if he does not care how much he gets for them, so he can always sell his services if he does not care how much they are to bring him, or who is to have them. When it comes to getting the best market price for services, however, it requires ability to do it, and it requires the capacity to deliver services that are worth the price.

The first thing in selling your services is to take a careful inventory of those services to find out what they are worth, how your qualifications compare in class with those with whom you must come in competition.

If what you have to sell has no merit, no actual worth, though you may be able with a glib tongue to sell it, it will not stay sold. The goods will come back on your hands. Your services being valueless, you will be set free.

A sale of your services is not a profitable sale unless it is profitable to your employer as well as to yourself. It cannot be a permanent sale unless your employer makes money by it. Employers and sales managers do not hire men simply for the pleasure of giving them jobs. They hire them in order to make money on their services.

Before you set out to sell yourself, do all you can to become fit to make money for the man you would like to have employ you, and see that you know all the ways in which you can serve him so you will be able to present your selling arguments in good order. To ask for a job with no plausible reason to give is practically asking your prospective employer to take you as an inexperienced laborer and teach you the business. He will not do this unless he is compelled to do so for lack of a better applicant.

The fact that you want a position is never any reason why it should be given to you. How many men would you expect to buy goods from you merely because you want to sell them? All the business you could get on that basis would not pay the depreciation on your sample trunk.

You must have something worth while to sell and you must be able to tell what it is. And the way in which you present your selling arguments is very important. To walk up to a sales manager's desk and say, "Do you want a salesman? I'm looking for a job. In my last position I got rid of lots of goods and I could sell your line all right," would get you a negative reply almost as quickly as if you were to use the formula some poor, helpless applicants use: "You don't want to hire a man, do you?"

If you have something to sell, get it before your prospective buyer as quickly as you can in as few words as you can, so he will find himself interested in the proposition and considering it before he has had time to say "No."

Suppose you say: "Mr. White, your line ought to be a strong seller in the anthracite region. There are

a hundred and fifty prospective buyers in Scranton and Wilkesbarre, and I know most of them personally. Have you a man covering that territory now?" If Mr. White has that territory well covered he may not care to think of putting on a new man, but it is possible that the number of prospects you mention is greater than he realized were there, greater by a good deal than his present salesman is seeing. If your statement does not open his eyes with regard to that field, it will at least open his eyes to the fact that his applicant is a man who knows something besides the necessity for getting a job. If the anthracite region is being properly covered, some other region may not be, and the sales manager who finds an applicant well informed about one field, and sharp enough to put his information to the fore, will probably reason that such a man can get information in other territory.

Naturally it is quite necessary for you to study the proposition carefully if you expect to be in a position to give the sales manager any information he does not already possess. Find out all you can about the work that might be done in the position you seek. Find out particularly what might be done that is not being done. Sales managers, men who employ salesmen, are not spending their time hunting for men who want jobs; they are looking for men who can increase their business.

Salesmen who can take orders from the regular customers, and perhaps hold what business has already been developed, are not so hard to get, but salesmen who can produce new business, who can make the trade in their territory grow, are not to be found every day. If you can suggest ability along that line

when you are looking for a buyer for your services, you ought to have no trouble in making a sale.

One of the best ways to fit yourself for applying for a position in a different house or in a different line is to keep in your pocket all the time a memorandum book and jot down in it any information you think might ever be of interest in connection with any kind of goods there is the slightest chance of your ever wanting to sell. Information gleaned thus right out of the field is information that is likely to be exclusively your own. When you find the place where it fits in, you find a place where it has a money value—and it has cost you no money to secure it and preserve it.

It is obvious that the sales manager knows his applicant will never present any better appearance than at the time of making his application. Goods are never expected to look better than at the time and under the circumstances in which they are being sold. If you do not look tidy when applying for a job, it is probable you never will. At least it is reasonable to believe that such is the case, and the sales manager believes it. There is no excuse for the salesman looking unfit when he is out to sell goods, and he is indeed a fool who will try to sell himself when handicapped by poor appearance, unbrushed clothes, dusty shoes or soiled linen.

Egotism, self-conceit, may spoil a man's chance to make his services seem desirable, but, on the other hand, excessive modesty may prevent him from getting his good qualities, his ability, before his prospect. There should be a degree of self-respect, such a good opinion of one's self as will command attention without causing the contempt inspired by arrant egotism.

In other words, though you may know it all, it does not do to show that you think you know it all.

It is of little use to try to assume for the moment the qualities you think the sales manager wants to find in you. Unless those qualities are actually developed in your character they will not seem a part of your equipment. Develop good qualities as fast as you can, but don't try to fool the prospective buyer of your services into thinking you are what you are not. You will only lay plans for future trouble for yourself when deception, if it succeeds, comes to light. Claim all you are entitled to claim, but stop there. A salesman might possibly deceive his employer for a little while, but not for long. If you have overrated yourself, you will not be able to deliver the goods, and the sale will not stand. You will be allowed to resign with no great credit to yourself.

Your ability to sell your services does not end its usefulness when you have secured a position. Your employer is a regular customer, a regular user of your services, and he must be sold every pay day. You are not selling yourself successfully unless you are able to command a rising salary, unless you can maintain a rising market.

If you can get no more for your work this year than you secured last year and the year before that, either you are not a better salesman this year or else you are not successful in selling your services. If the trouble is with the market rather than with yourself, perhaps it is advisable for you to seek another market. Perhaps the demand is temporarily slack for salesmen. In any event, don't be satisfied just to stand still. The instant you cannot earn more than you are getting you will begin to go back, and when

goods begin to deteriorate you know how hard it is to make them sell.

Opportunity is just as important in selling yourself as in selling supplies. Keep your eyes open for better opportunities. I do not mean by this to keep watching for a chance to jump to some other house, and thus to waste your usefulness by going from one thing to another until you cannot make good anywhere. What I do mean is that there will be opportunities to sell yourself for a higher position with your present employers—fitting yourself to occupy a more important place and asking for the place when the right time comes; and there will now and then be the rare opportunity to make a sale of your services to fill some bigger position elsewhere.

In selling yourself do not cheapen the goods in the eyes of the prospective buyer by speaking slightingly of yourself or of what you can do, and least of all of the line of goods you have been selling. Maintain a decent dignity in speaking of your work. Avoid slangy terms or careless language.

Your ability to present a line of goods to a buyer and to make him want them will be judged to a large extent at the outset by your ability to present yourself to a buyer of men's services and to make him think you would be desirable help for him. Your ability to sell goods will be gauged by your ability to sell yourself.